

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00000959510

HEROINES OF FRENCH SOCIETY



¹ Painted by herself. Uffizi, Florence
MADAME LE BRUN

Frontispiece

HEROINES OF FRENCH SOCIETY

IN THE COURT, THE REVOLUTION
THE EMPIRE, AND THE RESTORATION

By

Mrs. Bearne

Author of "A Queen of Napoleon's Court,"
"Early Valois Queens," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

MCMVII

I-45
P. 5

1-13890
1. 08



(All rights reserved.)

THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED
TO
ANNA AND KATE

PREFACE

IN the histories of the four women whose lives are here related, I have tried, as far as is possible in the limited space, to give an idea of the various ways in which the Revolutionary tempest at the close of the eighteenth century and the eventful years which preceded and followed it, affected, and were regarded by, persons of the different parties and classes to which they belonged.

The characters of the four heroines form as strong a contrast as their circumstances, principles, and surroundings.

In Mme. Le Brun, the most gifted of all, we see a beauty, a genius, and a woman unusually charming and attractive, thrown, before she was sixteen, into the society of the magnificent, licentious court of Louis XV. Married to a dissipated, *bourgeois* spendthrift, for whom she had never cared ; sought after, flattered, and worshipped in all the great courts of Europe ; courted by fascinating, unscrupulous men of the highest rank, without the protection of family connections and an assured

position; yet her religious principles, exalted character, and passionate devotion to her art, carried her unscathed and honoured through a life of extraordinary dangers and temptations.

She emigrated early, and far from being, as in most cases, a time of poverty and hardship, her exile was one long, triumphant career of prosperity.

Owing to her brilliant success, to the affection and friendship which surrounded her wherever she went, to her absorbing interest in her art, the delightful places and society in which she spent her time, and also to her own sunny, light-hearted nature, her long life, in spite of certain serious domestic drawbacks and sorrows, was a very happy one. Her wonderful capacity for enjoyment, her appreciation of beauty in nature and art, the great interest she took in matters intellectual and political, her pleasure in the society of her numerous friends, and her ardent devotion to the religious and royalist principles of her youth, continued undiminished through the peaceful old age which terminated her brilliant career.

With the same religious and political principles, the conditions of life which surrounded the Marquise de Montagu were totally different. A contrast indeed to the simple, artistic household, the early grief, poverty, and hard work, the odious step-father, the foolish mother, the worthless husband and daughter, the thousand difficulties and disadvantages which beset Mme. Le Brun, were the state and luxury, the sheltered life, the watchful care, and powerful protection bestowed upon the daughter of the house of Noailles; her mother, the saintly,

heroic Duchesse d'Ayen, her husband the gallant, devoted Marquis de Montagu.

She also was thrown very early into society ; but she entered it as a member of one of the greatest families in France, surrounded by an immense number of relations of the highest character and position.

Neither a genius nor yet possessed of any great artistic or intellectual talent, without worldly ambition, little attracted by the amusements of society, she was a sort of mixture of a *grande dame* and a saint.

The lofty asceticism of her theories and practice was perhaps almost too severe for ordinary mortals living in the world, and in some respects better adapted for a monastic than a secular life ; her emigration, so long delayed, was no time of success and happiness : long years of terror, danger, poverty, fearful trials, and sorrows endured with heroic fortitude and angelic patience, passed before she was restored to France and to the ancient castle which was the home and refuge of her later life.

In Mme. Tallien we have a woman exactly opposite to the other two in character, principles, and conduct. Differing from both of them in birth and circumstances—for she was the daughter of a Spanish banker of large fortune—with extraordinary beauty, the hot, passionate blood of the south, a nature, habits, and principles undisciplined by authority and unrestrained by religion, she was early imbued with the creed of the revolutionists, and carried their theories of atheism and licence to the logical consequences.

Yet the generosity and kindness of her heart, and the number of victims she saved, outweighed, though without effacing, the disorders of her earlier life,¹ during the latter part of which, as the wife of a Catholic, royalist prince, whose love she returned and to whose opinions she was converted, she deeply regretted the errors of Notre Dame de Thermidor.

In Mme. de Genlis we have a fourth and more complex type, a character in which good and evil were so mingled that it was often hard to say which predominated. With less beauty than the other three but singularly attractive, with extraordinary gifts and talents, with noble blood and scarcely any fortune, she spent a childhood of comparative poverty at her father's *château*, where she was only half educated, and at seventeen married the young Comte de Genlis, who had no money but was related to most of the great families of the kingdom.

From this time began her brilliant career. Essentially a woman of the world, delighting in society and amusement, though always praising the pleasures of solitude and retirement, she entered the household of the Duchesse d'Orléans, wife of the infamous Philippe-Égalité, and while constantly declaiming against ambition managed to get all her relations lucrative posts at the Palais Royal, and married one if not both her daughters to rich men of rank with notoriously bad reputations.

Perpetually proclaiming her religious principles

¹ Tallien, on hearing of her proposed marriage with the Prince de Chimay, remarked, "*Elle a beau faire, elle sera toujours Madame Tallien.*"

and loyalty to the throne, she was suspected of being concerned in the disgraceful libels and attacks upon the Queen, was on terms of friendship with some of the worst of the revolutionists, rejoiced in the earliest outbreaks of the beginning of the Revolution, and while she educated the Orléans children with a pompous parade of virtue and strictness, was generally and probably rightly looked upon as the mistress of their father.

She was a strange character, full of artificial sentiment, affectation, and self-deception, and, unlike the first three heroines of this book, the mystery and doubts which hung over her have never been cleared up.

Against the saintly Marquise de Montagu no breath of scandal could ever be spoken. Such calumnies as were spread against Mme. Le Brun, the work of the revolutionists, who hated her only for her religion and loyalty, never believed by those whose opinion would be worthy of consideration, soon vanished and were forgotten.

The *liaisons* of Mme. Tallien had nothing doubtful about them.

But the stories against Mme. de Genlis have never been cleared up. Much that was said about her was undoubtedly false, but there remain serious accusations which can neither be proved nor disproved; and that a long, intimate friendship between a prince of the character of Philippe-Égalité and a young, attractive woman who was governess to his children should have been no more than a platonic one, passes the bounds of credibility.

The history of Mme. de Genlis in the emigration differs from the other two, for having contrived to make herself obnoxious both to royalists and republicans her position was far worse than theirs.

But the deep affection she and her pupils displayed for each other, the devotion and kindness she showed them during their misfortunes, the courage and cheerfulness with which she bore the hardships and dangers of her lot, and the remorse and self-reproach which, in spite of the excellent opinion she usually entertained of herself, do occasionally appear in her memoirs, prove that many good qualities existed amongst so much that was faulty.

As to her writings, then so much in vogue, they were mostly works intended either to explain, assist, or illustrate the system of education which was the hobby of her life and which, if one may judge by "Adèle et Theodore," one of the most important of her tales, can only be called preposterous.

That the false sentiment, the absurd rules of life, the irksome, unnecessary restrictions, the cramping and stifling of all the natural affections and feelings of youth here inculcated should have been regarded with approval, even by the sourest and most solemn of puritans, seems difficult to believe; but that in the society of Paris at that time they should have been popular and admired is only another example of the inconsistency of human nature. She had a passion for children, but kindness to animals does not seem to have been one of the virtues she taught her pupils. We may hope that the fearful little

prigs described as the result of her system never did or could exist.

I have endeavoured to be accurate in all the dates and incidents, and have derived my information from many sources, including the "Mémoires de Louis XVIII., recueillis par le Duc de D——," Mémoires de la Comtesse d'Adhémar, de Mme. Campan, MM. de Besenval, de Ségur, &c., also the works of the Duchesse d'Abrantès, Comtesse de Bassanville, Mme. de Créquy, Mme. de Genlis, Mme. Le Brun, MM. Arsène Houssaye, de Lamartine, Turquan, Dauban, Bouquet, and various others, besides two stories never yet published, one of which was given me by a member of the family to which it happened; the other was told me in the presence of the old man who was the hero of it.

CONTENTS



	PAGE
PREFACE	vii

I

MADAME VIGÉE LE BRUN

CHAPTER I

The <i>ancien régime</i> —Close of the reign of Louis XIV.—The Regent Orléans—The court of Louis XV.—The philosophers—The artists—M. Vigée	3
--	---

CHAPTER II

The childhood of Lisette—Extraordinary talent—The convent—The household of an artist—Death of M. Vigée—Despair of Lisette—Begins her career—Re-marriage of her mother—The Dauphine	15
--	----

CHAPTER III

Brilliant success of Lisette—Love of her art—The Vernet—Life in Paris before the Revolution—Mme. Geoffrin—Marriage of Lisette to M. Le Brun—A terrible prediction	29
---	----

CHAPTER IV

	PAGE
Marie Antoinette—Birth of Mme Le Brun's daughter—The Royal Family—Brussels—Antwerp—The charms of French society—The Opera ball—An incident in the Terror—A Greek supper— <i>Le jeu de la Reine</i>	45

CHAPTER V

The theatre—Raincy—Chantilly—Calonne—Attempt to ruin the reputation of Mme. Le Brun—Two deplorable marriages—Fate of Mme. Chalgrin—Under the shadow of death—Mme. Du Barry	60
--	----

CHAPTER VI

End of the <i>ancien régime</i> —Foretaste of the Revolution—Threatened—Resolves to emigrate—Another alarm—Preparations—"You are wrong to go"—A terrible journey—Safe across the frontier	79
---	----

CHAPTER VII

Turin—Parma—The Infanta—Florence—Rome: Delightful life there—Artistic success—Social life—The French refugees—The Polignac—Angelica Kaufmann—An Italian summer—Life at Gensano—The Duchesse de Fleury	90
---	----

CHAPTER VIII

Naples—Lady Hamilton—Marie Caroline, Queen of Naples—Mesdames de France—Their escape— <i>Les chemises de Marat</i> —Rome—Terrible news from France—Venice—Turin—The Comtesse de Provence—The 10th August—The Refugees—Milan—Vienna—Delightful society—Prince von Kaunitz—Life at Vienna	104
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

Dresden—St. Petersburg—The Empress Catherine II.—Orloff—Potemkin—Russian hospitality—Magnificence of society at St. Petersburg—Mme. Le Brun is robbed—Slanders against her—The Russian Imperial family—Popularity and success of Mme. Le Brun—Death of the Empress Catherine	122
--	-----

CHAPTER X

	PAGE
Paul I.—Terror he inspired—Death of the mother of Mme. Le Brun—Marriage of her daughter—Moscow—The Tsarevitch Alexander—Assassination of Paul I.—“I salute my Emperor”—Mme. Le Brun returns to Paris—Changes—London—Life in England—Paris—Separated from M. Le Brun—Society during the Empire—Caroline Murat—Switzerland—Fall of the Empire—Restoration—Death of M. Le Brun—Of her daughter—Travels in France—Her nieces—Conclusion	139

II

LA MARQUISE DE MONTAGU

CHAPTER I

The House of Noailles—The court of Louis XV.—The Dauphin—The Dauphine—An evil omen—The Queen—The Convent of Fontevault—Death of Mme. Thérèse—The Infanta—Madame Henriette and the Duc d'Orléans—Mesdames Victoire, Sophie, and Louise	161
---	-----

CHAPTER II

The Greatest Names in France—The Maréchale de Noailles—Strange proceedings—Death of the Dauphin—Of the Dauphine—Of the Queen—The Children of France—Louis XIV. and Louis XV.	173
--	-----

CHAPTER III

The Duchesse d'Ayen—Birth and death of her sons—Her five daughters—Their education at home—Saintly life of the Duchess—Marriage of her eldest daughter to the Vicomte de Noailles—Of the second to the Marquis de la Fayette—Of the Dauphin to the Archduchess Marie Antoinette—The Comtesse de Noailles—Marriages of the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois to the Princesses of Sardinia—Death of Louis XV.—Unhappy marriage of the third daughter of the Duc d'Ayen to the Vicomte du Roure—Afterwards to Vicomte de Thésan—Paulette and Rosalie	
--	--

	PAGE
de Noailles—Adrienne de la Fayette—Radical ideas of the Vicomte de Noailles and Marquis de la Fayette—Displeasure of the family and the King—La Fayette and de Noailles join the American insurgents—Grief and heroism of Adrienne—Marriage of Pauline to the Marquis de Montagu	182

CHAPTER IV

The Marquis de Montagu rejoins his regiment—Life of Pauline at the <i>hôtel de Montagu</i> —Affection of her father-in-law—Brilliant society—Story of M. de Continges—Death of Pauline's child—Marriage of Rosalie to Marquis de Grammont—Birth of Pauline's daughters—The court of Louis XVI.—The royal family—Dissensions at court—Madame Sophie and the storm—Extravagance of the Queen and Comte d'Artois—The Comte d'Artois and Mlle. Duthé—Scene with the King— <i>Le petit Trianon</i> —The Palace of Marly—A sinister guest	194
---	-----

CHAPTER V

Weak character of Louis XVI.—Quarrels at court—Mme. de Tessé—Forebodings of Mme. d'Ayen—La Fayette—Saintly lives of Pauline and her sisters—Approach of the Revolution—The States-General—Folly of Louis XVI.—Scenes at Versailles—Family political quarrels—Royalist and Radical—Death of Pauline's youngest child	206
---	-----

CHAPTER VI

The Château de Plauzet—Varennnes—Increasing danger—Decided to emigrate—Triumphal progress of La Fayette—The farewell of the Duchesse d'Ayen—Paris—Rosalie—A last mass—Escape to England	219
---	-----

CHAPTER VII

M. de Montagu returns to Paris—M. de Beaune—Richmond—Death of Noémi—Aix-la-Chapelle—Escape of the Duc d'Ayen and Vicomte de Noailles—La Fayette arrested in Austria—The Hague—Crossing the Meuse—Margate—	
---	--

Richmond—Hardships of poverty—Brussels—Letter from Mme. de Tessé—Joins her in Switzerland—Murder of M. and Mme. de Mouchy—Goes to meet the Duc d'Ayen—He tells her of the murder of her grandmother, Mme. de Noailles, her mother, the Duchesse d'Ayen, and her eldest sister, the Vicomtesse de Noailles—Mme. de la Fayette still in prison	227
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII

Illness—Leaves Switzerland with Mme. de Tessé—They settle near Altona—Hears of Rosalie's safety—Life on the farm—Release of Adrienne—Her visit—Farm of Wittnold—Peaceful life there—Rosalie and Adrienne—Birth of Pauline's son—He and her other children live—Release of La Fayette—Their visit to Wittnold—Meeting of Adrienne, Pauline, and Rosalie at the Hague	248
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

Return to France—The inheritance of the Duchesse d'Ayen—Loss of the Noailles property—Inherits the Castle of Fontenay—Death of Mme. de la Fayette—Prosperous life at Fontenay—Conclusion	258
--	-----

III

MADAME TALLIEN

CHAPTER I

Térèzia Cabarrus—Comes to Paris—Married to the Marquis de Fontenay—Revolutionary sympathies—Unpopularity of royal family—The wig of M. de Montyon—The Comte d'Artois and his tutor—The Comte de Provence and Louis XV.	269
--	-----

CHAPTER II

The makers of the Revolution— <i>Fête à la Nature</i> —Tallien—Dangerous times—An inharmonious marriage—Colonel la Mothe—A Terrorist—The beginning of the emigration—A sinister prophecy	281
--	-----

CHAPTER III

PAGE

- The 10th of August—The September massacres—Tallien—
The emigrant ship—Arrest at Bordeaux—In prison—
Saved by Tallien. 297

CHAPTER IV

- Divorced—M. de Fontenay escapes to Spain—The mistress
of Tallien—Her influence and his save many lives—
Robespierre—Singular circumstances at the birth of
Louis XVII.—The vengeance of the Marquis de —
—Enmity of Robespierre—Arrest of Térésia—La Force . 308

CHAPTER V

- The Bastille—Prisons of the Revolution—Les Carmes—
Cazotte—The Terrorists turn upon each other—
Joséphine de Beauharnais—A musician in the Concier-
gerie—A dog in prison—Under the guardianship of a
dog—Tallien tries to save Térésia—A dagger—La Force
—The last hope—The Tocsin—The 9th Thermidor . 323

CHAPTER VI

- “Robespierre is dead!”—Notre Dame de Thermidor—End of
the Terror—The prisons open—Decline of Tallien’s power
—Barras—Napoleon—“Notre Dame de Septembre!”—
M. Ouvrard—Separates from Tallien—He goes to Egypt
—Consul in Spain—Dies in Paris—Térésia stays in Paris
—Ingratitude of some she had saved—Marries the Prince
de Chimay—Conclusion 335

IV

MADAME DE GENLIS

CHAPTER I

- Birth of Félicité Ducrest—Château de Saint-Aubin—Made
chanoinessc—Story of her uncle and her mother—Her
childhood—Comes to Paris—Goes into society—Evil
reputation of the *hôtel Tencin* 351

CHAPTER II

	PAGE
M. de la Haie—Death of the Dauphin—M. de Saint-Aubin goes to St. Domingo—Taken prisoner by the English—Returns to France—Imprisoned for debt—His death—Difficulties and poverty—Félicité marries the Comte de Genlis—His family—The Abbess de Montivilliers and the robbers—Life in the convent—Birth of a daughter .	362

CHAPTER III

Presentation at Versailles—La Rosière—Father and son—Mme. de Montesson—A terrible scene—The Comtesse de Custine—Mme. de Genlis enters the Palais Royal .	375
--	-----

CHAPTER IV

Society of the Palais Royal—Philippe-Égalité—An apparition—Mlle. Mars—M. Ducrest—Marriage of Mme. de Montesson—Marly—The Prime Minister of France .	386
---	-----

CHAPTER V

La Muette—Sunrise—Italy—Nocturnal adventure—Governess to the children of Orléans—Scandalous reports—Marriages of her daughters—Death of the elder one—The Comte de Valence	397
--	-----

CHAPTER VI

Death of the Duc d'Orléans—M. de Genlis—Sillery—Coming of the Revolution—The Bastille—Anger of the Duchesse d'Orléans—Dissensions	411
---	-----

CHAPTER VII

In England—Sheridan—Strange adventure—Raincy—Farewell to Philippe-Égalité—Proscribed—Tournay—Pamela—Death of the King	426
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII

Flight and danger—Mons—Zurich—Zug—The Convent of Bremgarten—Death of M. de Sillery—Of Égalité—Mademoiselle d'Orléans and the Princesse de Conti .	438
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

PAGE

- A wandering life—"The tyrant is no more"—Marriage of
 Henriette — Hamburg — Berlin — Antwerp — Brussels—
 Returns to France—Terrible changes—Shattered fortune
 — Literary success—The Empire — Napoleon — Mme.
 de Genlis and her friends—Death of Mme. de Montesson 449

CHAPTER X

- Interesting society—Anecdotes of the past Terror—Casimir—
 The Restoration—Madame Royale—Louis XVIII.—The
coiffeur of Marie Antoinette—The regicide—Return of
 the Orléans family—An astrologer—A faithful servant
 —Society of the Restoration — Isabey — Meyerbeer —
 Conclusion 466

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



MADAME LE BRUN. (<i>Painted by herself. Uffizi, Florence</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
LOUIS XV. (<i>Rigaud</i>)	<i>Facing p. 8</i>
MARIE ANTOINETTE, QUEEN OF FRANCE. (<i>Mme. Vigée Le Brun</i>)	,, 45
ANTWERP. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	,, 49
CALONNE. (<i>Mme. Vigée Le Brun</i>)	,, 65
MADAME LE BRUN ET SA FILLE. (<i>Painted by herself</i>)	,, 76
THE PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	,, 92
ROME. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	,, 107
VENICE. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	,, 112
CATHERINE II., EMPRESS OF RUSSIA. (<i>Schebanoff</i>)	,, 125
PAUL, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA. (<i>From picture given to Sir Home Popham, Capt. R.N., by the Empress Marie</i>)	,, 139

COMTESSE D'ANDLAU. (<i>Mme. Vigée Le Brun</i>)	Facing p.	152
MADAME ADÉLAÏDE. (<i>Nattier</i>)	„	170
COMTE D'ARTOIS, AFTERWARDS CHARLES X.	„	179
MADAME SOPHIE. (<i>Nattier</i>)	„	203
LE PETIT TRIANON. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	„	205
MARIE ANTOINETTE. (<i>Paul Delaroche</i>).	„	238
PALAIS DU LUXEMBOURG. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	„	245
MARIE DE VICHY-CHAMBRON, MARQUISE DU DEFFAND	„	281
FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE. <i>(Tournières)</i>	„	284
MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE. (<i>Guiard</i>)	„	321
GEORGES DANTON. (<i>Greuze</i>)	„	330
NAPOLEON	„	340
LA MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR. (<i>Boucher</i>)	„	352
AMSTERDAM. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	„	390
NICE. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>)	„	399
CHILLON. (<i>E. H. Bearne</i>).	„	448
MADAME ROYALE. (<i>Mme. Vigée Le Brun</i>)	„	470
JUDITH PASTA. (<i>Gérard</i>).	„	480
MALIBRAN	„	484

I

MADAME VIGÉE LE BRUN

CHAPTER I

The *ancien régime*—Close of the reign of Louis XIV.—The Regent Orléans—The court of Louis XV.—The philosophers—The artists—M. Vigée.

WHEN Elisabeth Louise Vigée was born at Paris, April, 1755, the French court and monarchy were still at the height of their splendour and power.

Only a few years since, the chronicler Barbier had remarked, "It is very apparent that we make all Europe move to carry out our plans, and that we lay down the law everywhere." ¹

Louis XV. was upon the throne ; the manners and customs of the *ancien régime* were in full force, though mitigated and softened by the growing enlightenment and liberalism which were spreading not only in the literary and professional circles, but amongst the younger generation in all classes.

Middle-aged men and women had seen Louis XIV., *Louis le Grand*, "*le Roi Soleil*," as an old man ; old people could remember him in the prime of his life, the most magnificent King with the most stately court in Christendom. The Cardinal de Luynes, the

¹ Journal de Barbier, "Chronique de la Régence," 1741.

Maréchal de Croz, the Duc de Richelieu and other *grands seigneurs* who preserved the manners and traditions of that time, were looked upon as models of courtly manners and high-breeding by those who complained that in the reaction and licence of the regency and court of Louis XV., vice and corruption were far more unrestrained, more scandalous, less disguised and altogether more indecorous than under the ceremonious and stately rule of his great-grandfather.¹

The Queen, Marie Leczinska, daughter of Stanislaus, ex-King of Poland, was a harmless, uninteresting woman, who had no ambition, no talent, no influence, and a great many children.

The King had been married to her when he was fifteen and she two-and-twenty; and after the first few years had lived in an open immorality which was very general at his court, and for a long time did not much affect his popularity with the nation, though every now and then caricatures and epigrams more witty than prudent appeared; as, for instance, the following, written upon the base of the pedestal of an equestrian statue of him, around which were grouped the figures of Strength, Prudence, Justice, and Peace:

“Grotesque monument, infâme piédestal.
Les vertus sont à pied, le vice est à cheval.”

And a few days afterwards upon the same monument:

¹ Louis XV. was five years old when he succeeded his great-grandfather, Louis XIV. (1715).

“Il est ici comme à Versailles
Il est sans cœur et sans entrailles.”¹

Louis, however, was more selfish and indifferent than cruel. He was by no means like Frederic William of Prussia, a savage to his family and his subjects, or like three out of the four Georges of England, who were not only outrageously immoral themselves, but brutal tyrants to their wives² and bitter enemies of their parents and children.

His court was the most splendid, the most extravagant, and the most licentious in Europe; the cruelty and oppression of many of the great nobles and especially the princes of the blood, were notorious; the laws were harsh and unjust to a frightful extent, but they were not of his making. He neglected the Queen, but did not ill-treat her; he was fond of his children and indulgent to them; while, far from being disliked by his subjects, he was called *Louis le Bien-aimé*.

Barbier, writing in December, 1758, gives another sarcastic verse going about in society, which, as it was directed against the King's all-powerful mistress, the Marquise de Pompadour, attracted general attention, irritated the King, and caused the author, who was discovered to be an officer of the guards, to be sentenced to a year's imprisonment, after which to be banished to Malta, as he belonged to the order of St. John of Jerusalem.

The lines are as follows, and refer to a *château* then being built by Louis for the Marquise de

¹ “Chronique de la Régence” (Barbier, 1748).

² George II., although in other respects much resembling the first and fourth Georges, did not ill-treat his wife.

Pompadour, whose original name was Jeanne Antoinette Poisson :

“Fille d'une sangsue, et sangsue elle-même
Poisson d'une arrogance extrême,
Étale en ce château sans crainte et sans effroi
La substance du peuple et la honte du Roi.”

Barbier, a lawyer and man of the world, whose journal of eight volumes gives a vivid impression of the life of that time, after remarking that the sentence was a very lenient one,¹ that the *château* was not so large as that of many a *fermier général*, and that the building thereof gave employment to many poor people, goes on to say, “As for ‘shame,’ . . . if it is because the King has a mistress, why who has not? except M. le duc d'Orléans.² . . . The Comte de Clermont, Abbé de Saint-Germain-des-Près, openly keeps Mlle. le Duc, who was an opera dancer; she spends three-quarters of the year at Berny, the Abbé's country house, where she does the honours. She has a fine house in the *rue de Richelieu*, where the Prince often spends a week. The fathers of the abbey who have business with him go to him there in the morning, for he does not lodge in the palace of the abbey. This goes on in sight of every one, and nobody says a word about it.

“For more than twenty years M. le Comte de Charolois has detained in captivity, against her will, Mme. de Conchamp, wife of a Maître-des-Requêtes, whom he carried off, and who would have been

¹ It was afterwards changed into twenty years' imprisonment, and then banishment (d'Argenson).

² Son of the late Regent.

much happier in her own house. Fifteen out of twenty men at the court do not live with their wives but have mistresses, and even amongst private people at Paris, nothing is more frequent; therefore it is ridiculous to expect the King, who is absolutely the master, to be in a worse position than his subjects and all the kings his predecessors."

There had, in fact, been a strong reaction against the restraint and dulness of the last few years of the reign of Louis XIV., when the magnificent, pleasure-loving King, whose victorious armies had devastated Europe, who had made princes of his illegitimate children, lavished the riches of the country upon his mistresses, and yet in his stately beauty and fascination been the idol of France; had changed into a melancholy old man, depressed and disillusioned, looking with uneasiness upon the past, with fear upon the future; while the brilliant beauties and splendid festivities of bygone days had given place to virtue, strict propriety, and Mme. de Maintenon.

When Louis XIV. died, people were very tired of this altered state of things. For some time they had been extremely dull and were eager for change and amusement.

With a King of five years old, and such a Regent as the Duke of Orléans, they were tolerably sure of both. The reign of pleasure, luxury, and licence began with enthusiasm. Never, during the life of Louis le Grand, had the atmosphere of the Court been what it became under the regency, and under his great-grandson.

The Regent Orléans was not, like the Princes of

Condé, Conti, Charolois, and others of the blood royal, cruel, haughty, or vindictive ; on the contrary, he was good-natured, easy, and indulgent ; but he was dissipated, extravagant, and licentious to such a degree that he himself, the court, and his family were the scandal of Europe. The same frenzied pursuit of enjoyment, the same lavish, sensual, reckless, luxurious life, characterised the whole of the reign of Louis XV.

In reading the memoirs and chronicles of that time one scarcely realises the existence of the many families and households, especially among the *noblesse de province*¹ or country gentlemen, and the middle classes, amongst whom the principles of order and religion were observed ; and of an increasing circle of literary and philosophic persons who inveighed against the crimes, vices, and abuses of the age.

Those whose ideas of France in the eighteenth century are derived only from such books as Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities," or even from a casual acquaintance with a few of the histories and chronicles of the time, are apt vaguely to picture to themselves a nation composed partly of oppressed, starving peasants, and partly of their oppressors, a race of well-bred ruffians and frivolous, heartless women ; all splendidly dressed, graceful, polite, and charming in their manners amongst themselves ; but arrogant, cruel, and pitiless to those beneath them.

Many such undoubtedly there were ; the laws

¹ It is, however, true that such of the *noblesse de province* as were inclined to be tyrannical were worse than the great nobles who belonged to the court ; and their oppression was more felt.



LOUIS XV.

Rigaud

To face page 8

were terribly oppressive, the privileges of the favoured classes outrageously unjust; while as for public opinion, Barbier himself remarks that the public is a fool, and must always be unworthy of the consideration of any man.

But still, in all ages human nature is the same, and has to be reckoned with under all circumstances, and that people in general are much better than the laws which govern them is evident.

If the cruel, unjust marriage laws of England, which until a few years ago were in force, had been universally and fully carried out, making the husband an almost irresponsible tyrant and the wife a helpless, hopeless slave, domestic life would have been hell upon earth. But as the great majority of men had no wish to ill-treat their wives, confiscate their money, deprive them of their children or commit any of the atrocities sanctioned by the laws of their country, families upon the whole went on in harmony and affection. It was only now and then, when a man *did* wish to avail himself of the arbitrary power placed in his hands, that the results of such iniquitous laws were brought before the public. At the same time, however, the knowledge of their existence and the tone of thought, prejudices, and customs which consequently prevailed, had an influence upon men who were not the least tyrannically inclined, but merely acted in accordance with the ideas and opinions of every one around them.

And amidst all the oppression, vice, and evil of which we hear so often in France of the eighteenth century, there was also much good of which

we hear little or nothing. The reason is obvious. Good people are, unfortunately, seldom so amusing to write or read about as bad ones. Has any one ever met with a child who wanted to be told a story about a good little girl or boy? And is it not true, though lamentable, that there are many persons who would rather read a book about a bushranger than a bishop?

The *noblesse d'épée* was the highest, most brilliant, and most scandalous in France; but in its ranks were to be found heroic examples and saintly characters; while far away in the convents and *châteaux* scattered over the country and in quiet *bourgeois* families in the towns lives were led of earnest faith, devotion, and self-denial.

Many an abbess, many a *châtelaine* spent time and money amongst the rich and poor; and there were *seigneurs* who helped and protected the peasants on their estates and were regarded by them with loyalty and affection. To some extent under the influence of the ideas and prejudices amongst which they had been born and educated, yet they lived upright, honourable, religious lives, surrounded by a mass of oppression, licence, and corruption in the destruction of which they also were overwhelmed.

Amongst the philosophic set, the "encyclopædists," so-called from the encyclopædia which had been started by Diderot, and to which Grimm, d'Alembert, Buffon, Marmontel, and many other well-known men were contributors, there was a spirit of passionate revolt against the cruelties and abuses of the time, an ardent thirst for liberty,

much generous sympathy with the poor and oppressed, and desire to alleviate the sufferings of humanity.

They were, as usual, men of all sorts, shades, and aims. Many, inspired with lofty but unpractical enthusiasm, dreamed of an impossible republic founded upon that of Plato ; the ideal of others was a constitutional monarchy and free parliament such as existed in England ; there were also, of course, numbers who desired to upset the present order of things so that they might usurp the power and seize the property of everybody for themselves.

But besides their hostility to religion, the private characters of these philosophers did not, in many cases, by any means correspond with their writings and professions.

Rousseau, notwithstanding his assumption of superior virtue, his pretence of being a leader and teacher thereof, his especial exhortations and instructions to parents about the care and education of their children, and his theories on friendship and love, was absolutely without gratitude for the help and kindness of his friends, ill-tempered, conceited, and quarrelsome ; saw no degradation in his *liaison* with a low, uneducated woman, and abandoned all his children in their infancy at the gate of the *enfants trouvés*.

Freethinkers, deists, or open atheists most of them were, delighting in blasphemous assaults and attacks, not only upon the Church and religion in general, but upon God himself ; and so outrageous and scurrilous was their habitual language

upon such subjects that they found it necessary to disguise, by a sort of private slang known only to each other, their conversation in public places where it might be not only offensive to their hearers, but dangerous to themselves.

The *salon* of the famous Mme. Geoffrin was the great resort of philosophers, literary men of different kinds, painters, musicians, and celebrities of various countries, people distinguished in the political world, or belonging to the court and the great noblesse, French and foreign.

In art, as in everything else, it was still the age of the artificial. The great wigs and flowing drapery of the last reign had given place to powder and paint, ribbons and *pompons*, pink roses, and pale blue satin or velvet, *à la Pompadour*.

When people in Parisian society thought of the country, they thought of lambs with ribbons round their necks, shepherdesses in fanciful costumes with long crooks, or a "*rosière*" kneeling before the family and friends of the seigneur to be crowned with flowers and presented with a *rose* as the reward of virtue, in the presence of an admiring crowd of villagers; of conventional gardens, clipped trees, and artificial ruins; but wild, picturesque mountain scenery was their abhorrence.

The taste of the day was expressed in the pictures of the favourite artists, Watteau and Greuze, who painted the graceful groups and landscapes every one admired: charming women sitting in beautiful gardens dressed in costumes suitable for a ball or court festivity, or anything on earth but being out of doors in the country.

Fragonard, the Provençal, had more depth and dramatic feeling, the passion of the south and the love of nature in his work gave a stronger, truer, more impressive tone to his pictures; but Boucher, the favourite painter of Louis XV., the Marquise de Pompadour, and the court would seem from his pictures to have looked upon everything in life as if it were a scene in a carnival or *fête*. His goddesses and saints, even the holy Virgin herself, were painted from models from the theatre, and looked as if they were; his gardens, roses, silks, satins, nymphs, fountains, and garlands were the supreme fashion; every one wanted him to paint their portrait; he had more commissions than he could execute, and his head was turned by the flattery lavished upon him.

David, Chardin, the celebrated *genre* painter, Van Loo, Gérard, La Tour, Joseph Vernet, and many others were flourishing. Louis Vigée was also an artist. He painted portraits in pastel, of which his daughter says that they were extremely good, many of them worthy of the famous La Tour; also charming scenes after the style of Watteau, in oil.

Although not a great painter he was absolutely devoted to his art, in which he would become so absorbed as to forget everything else. On one occasion he was going out to dinner and had already left the house, when he remembered something he wanted to do to a picture upon which he was working. He therefore went back, took off the wig he was wearing, put on a night-cap, and began to retouch the picture. Presently he got up, went out again, forgetting all about the night-cap which

he still had on, and which formed a singular contrast to his coat trimmed with gold braid, and the sword at his side; and would certainly have presented himself at the party to which he was going in this costume had he not fortunately met a neighbour, who stopped him and pointed out the strangeness of his appearance.

CHAPTER II

The childhood of Lisette—Extraordinary talent—The convent—
The household of an artist—Death of M. Vigée—Despair of
Lisette—Begins her career—Re-marriage of her mother—The
Dauphine.

THE early years of the childhood of Elisabeth Vigée were peaceful and happy enough, and already at a tender age the genius which was to determine and characterise her future life began to appear. According to the usual custom she was placed in a convent to be educated, and though only six years old when she was sent there, she had then and during the five years of her convent life, the habit of drawing and scribbling perpetually and upon everything she could lay her hands on, much to the displeasure of the good Sisters and of her companions.

For nothing was safe from her pencil: her books, her copy-books, even those of her schoolfellows, the walls of the dormitory, every available space was covered with heads, figures, and landscapes in crayon or charcoal, and when out in the playground she drew with a stick upon the sand.

Little did the other children who made complaints that their books were "spoiled," or the nuns

who gave reproofs and decreed punishments, imagine what valuable possessions these scribbled, spoilt books and papers would have become in future years if they had taken care of them, for the artistic genius was in them even then. One evening, when she was seven or eight years old, the child drew the head of a man with a beard which she showed to her father. Transported with delight, he exclaimed :

"Tu seras peintre, mon enfant, ou jamais il n'en sera." ¹

She always kept this drawing, her foretaste of the brilliant success that began so early and never forsook her.

Lise, or Lisette, as she was generally called, was a delicate child, and her parents, who were devotedly fond of her and very anxious about her, frequently came and took her home for a few days, greatly to her delight. With them and her brother Louis, their only child besides herself, she was perfectly happy. Louis was three years younger, and did not possess her genius for painting, but the brother and sister were always deeply attached to one another.

Her mother was extremely beautiful, of rather an austere character, and very religious. With her the children attended High Mass and the other offices of the Church, especially during Lent ; and upon the sensitive, impressionable girl the solemn beauty of the music, and especially the deep notes of the organ, produced an almost overpowering effect. Often as she sat or knelt by her mother the rich,

¹ "Thou wilt be a painter, my child, or never will there be one."

melodious tones echoing through choir and nave in the dim, religious gloom would throw her into a kind of rapture, and end in a passion of tears which she could not always conceal. This intense feeling for music, especially religious music, lasted all her life.

But her greatest love was for her father ; it was almost adoration. Louis Vigée was exactly opposite in disposition to his wife, to whom he was, however, devoted. Kindly, affectionate, lighthearted, and thoughtless, his love for her did not interfere with his admiration for other women ; a pretty grisette was quite able to turn his head, and on New Year's day he would amuse himself by walking about Paris, saluting the prettiest young girls he met, on pretence of wishing them a happy new year.

Among his friends he was universally popular ; every evening at his house were to be found some of the artists, poets, and other literary men who formed the society in which he delighted, and came to the suppers the gaiety and pleasantness of which were quite appreciated by the child who was always allowed to be of the party, but not to sit up after the dessert was upon the table. She would lie awake in her room, listening to the laughter and songs which she enjoyed without understanding, long after she was in bed.

The days were as happy as the evenings, for they were spent in her father's studio, where he allowed her to paint heads in pastel and to draw all day long with his crayons.

At eleven years old Lisette was taken from the convent to live at home, after having made her first Communion. She had so outgrown her strength

that she stooped from weakness, and her features gave at present little promise of the well-known beauty of her after-life. Her brother, on the contrary, was remarkably handsome, full of life and spirits, distinguished at his college by his talents and intelligence, and the favourite of his mother, while the father's preference was for the daughter whose genius was his pride and delight, and to whom his indulgence and tenderness made up for the strictness or inequality she observed in the dealings of her mother with her brother and herself. Speaking in her "Souvenirs" ¹ of her deep affection for her father, she declares that not a word he ever said before her had she forgotten.

Amongst the friends who frequented their house her surprising talent naturally excited much attention and interest. One of those she liked best was the historical painter, Doyen,² a man full of culture, information, and good sense, whose remarks upon persons and things, as well as upon painting, she found very useful.

Poinsinet, the author, was a man of very different calibre. That he had plenty of ability was proved by the fact that on the same evening he obtained three dramatic successes, *i.e.*, *Ernelinde* at the Opera, *Le Cercle* at the Français, and *Tom Jones* at the Opéra-Comique. But his absurd credulity made him the object of continual practical jokes, or *mystifications* as they were called.

¹ "Souvenirs de Mme. Vigée Le Brun," t. 1, p. 8.

² Gabriel François Doyen, b. 1726, d. 1806. Painted "La Mort de Virginie," "Sainte-Geneviève des Ardente," "La Mort de Saint-Louis," &c.

On one occasion his friends made him believe that there existed the post of "fire-screen to the King," and that it might possibly be given to him. In order to qualify himself, they persuaded him to stand frequently before the fire until his legs were quite scorched, assuring him when he wished to move away that if he did not persevere he would never be able to fill that post.

Yet his delineation of the society of the day was so true that somebody remarked about his play, *Le Cercle*, that Poinsinet must have been listening at the doors. He was drowned in Spain while crossing the Guadalquivir.

Caresne was a painter and poet whose poems and pictures were bad, but his conversation amusing. He wrote the following verses to Lisette, whose rapid progress and intelligence made her seem to be already passing out of childhood into girlhood :

Plus n'est le temps, où de mes seuls couplets
 Ma Lise aimait à se voir célébrée.
 Plus n'est le temps où de mes seuls bouquets
 Je la voyais toujours parée.
 Les vers que l'amour me dictait
 Ne répétaient que le nom de Lisette,
 Et Lisette les écoutait.
 Plus d'un baiser payait ma chansonnette,
 Au même prix qui n'eût été poëte ?

He gave Lisette lessons in oil-painting for which his wife used to come and fetch her. They were so poor that on one occasion when she wished to finish a head she was painting, and accepted their invitation to stay and dine, she found the dinner consisted only of soup and potatoes.

Time passed only too quickly in the happy

sheltered life of the gifted child in her father's house. The days were full of delight as she sat absorbed in the work which was a passion to her in the studio of the father she idolised. The evenings were full of pleasure, interest, and variety, as she listened to the brilliant conversation, artistic, intellectual, and political, of her father and the friends of many different ideas and opinions with whom he associated.

Louis Vigée was neither in principles nor tastes at all in sympathy with the new philosophic party ; on the contrary, he looked with disapproval and uneasiness upon the future, from which they were so eagerly expecting their millenium.

Returning home one day after dinner with Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvetius, and others of their set, he seemed to be so out of spirits that his wife asked if anything were the matter.

"*Ma chère amie,*" he replied, "all that I have been hearing makes me think that the world will very soon be upside down."

He was not, however, to live to see the realisation of his fears. Not much more than a year after Lisette's return from her convent, a terrible calamity befel her in the loss of the father whose love and protection had made the sunshine of her life, and by whose death her lot was entirely changed and her happiness ruined.

The illness of Louis Vigée was caused by a fish-bone which he had swallowed, and which had become fixed in the stomach. Although the mania for operations amongst English doctors of the twentieth century, which in this country adds a

new terror to illness, did not exist at that time in France ; under the circumstances, nevertheless, more than one operation was considered necessary ; in spite of, or perhaps because of which, although the most skilful surgeon was employed, and was a personal friend who bestowed devoted and incessant care and attention upon the invalid, it soon became apparent that he had not long to live. Heartbroken, Lisette stood by her father's bedside with her mother and brother to receive his last blessing and farewell, and an hour afterwards he breathed his last.

With her father's death vanished for ever the bright, unclouded happiness of her childhood ; her life henceforth was chequered with brilliant success, artistic and social, and acute sorrows in her domestic life ; like a picture in which the brightness of the lights seem to deepen the gloom of the shadows. They were very badly off, for Louis Vigée had left scarcely any provision for his family, and Lisette for some time was so stunned with the shock and grief that she seemed to be sunk in despair, taking no interest in anything, and giving up even the painting which had been her passion. Doyen, amongst other friends of Vigée, used to come to see them ; his visits were the greatest consolation to them all, especially to the young girl, who appreciated the affection he had always shown for her father, and by him she was persuaded to resume the studies and work which alone had power to divert her mind in some degree from her sorrow. She began to paint from nature, and did several portraits both in oil and in pastel, working

chiefly with another young girl about a year older than herself, Mlle. Boquet, whose father kept a curiosity shop in the *rue Saint Denis* where he lived, and where Lisette used to go in the evenings to draw from casts by candlelight with her friend.

Very often in the mornings the two girls went together to the artist Briard, who had a studio in the Louvre, and who, though an indifferent painter, drew well, and had several other young girls as pupils.

Lisette and her friend used to stay there all day, taking their dinner in a basket, and had an especial weakness for certain slices of excellent *bœuf à la mode* which they bought of the *concierge* of one of the doors of the Louvre. Lisette always declared in after life that she could never get any so good.

Lisette was now rapidly becoming very pretty, to the great satisfaction of her mother, who, seeing that in spite of her busy life and deep interest in her work, her spirits still suffered from the loss of her father, tried to give her all the distraction possible. She would take her to walk in the Tuileries gardens, where the beauty of both mother and daughter attracted much attention; and what pleased her most, to see all the picture galleries possible. They often went to the Luxembourg, in the galleries of which were then the Rubens and many others of the old masters now in the Louvre; besides which they saw all the good private collections. By far the best at that time was the gallery of the Palais Royal, collected by the Regent, Duc d'Orléans. These pictures were sold in the Revolution. Many of them were bought by Lord Stafford.

Besides her delight in wandering through these galleries where she would stand before her favourite pictures, never tired of studying them, absorbed in their beauty, she copied heads from Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, Greuze, and others, and although she was only fourteen years old, the portraits she painted were not only becoming known, but were the principal support of the family, besides paying for the school expenses, books, and clothes of her brother.

But however hard she worked, the family finances did not become sufficiently flourishing to satisfy Mme. Vigée, who, driven to desperation by their poverty, and of course anxious about the future, everything depending upon the work of a delicate girl of fourteen ; resolved to marry again, and unfortunately selected a rich jeweller of her acquaintance, to whose house in the *rue St. Honoré* she removed with her children after the marriage.

She had far better have remained in her old home, poor and free ; for directly they were married she discovered the real character of her second husband : an ill-tempered, avaricious man, who refused his wife and step-children even the necessaries of life, although Lisette was foolish enough to give him all she earned by her portraits. She hated him still more because he had taken possession of her father's clothes, which he wore, to her grief and indignation. Joseph Vernet, who, like many of her old friends, still interested himself in her, was furious at all this, and represented to her that she ought to pay a certain pension to her odious step-father and keep the rest of the money herself ; but she feared such a

suggestion might make matters worse for her mother, and therefore went on allowing herself to be robbed.

She really cared very little for the money she so easily made, all her love was for her art, which alone had the power to raise her above the petty miseries and troubles of her present life.

Her step-father was continually doing something or other to annoy and distress them. Their new home was immediately opposite the gardens of the Palais Royal, which in those days were not only very extensive but extremely beautiful, with great forest-trees whose deep shade the sun could not penetrate.

The great avenue was a fashionable promenade on Sundays and *fêtes*, and to Lisette and her friend Mlle. Boquet, both of whom grew prettier every year, it was a great amusement to walk there with the mother and step-father of the former. The Grand-Opéra being close by, when the performance was over, which then was at half-past eight, it was the fashion, on summer nights, for every one to come out and walk about these gardens, where sometimes until two o'clock in the morning it was a scene of enchantment. People belonging to the court and society, *bourgeois*, actors, musicians, the *demi-monde* all went there. Every well-dressed woman in the evening carried a large bouquet of flowers, the scent of which filled the air, groups of people scattered about sang or played the harp, violin, or guitar, especially on moonlight nights; amateurs and artistes too, the delicious music of Saint Georges, Alsedo and Garat often attracted crowds of listeners.

The *demi-monde* at that time kept themselves apart from the rest of the company ; Frenchmen of good position and manners did not appear with them in public. If they were with them at the theatre it was in a closed box ; though in her "Souvenirs" Mme. Le Brun declares that the fortunes made by them and the men ruined by their extravagance far surpassed anything of the kind after the Revolution.

The beautiful and notorious Mlle. Duthé was often to be seen, amongst others, attended by an Englishman who was not so scrupulous about appearances, and whom Mme. Le Brun saw again with the same person eighteen years afterwards at a theatre in London.

Besides the gardens of the Tuileries, Luxembourg, and Palais Royal, there were plenty of other places to which the Parisians resorted for amusement.

There was the Colysée, an immense place in the Champs-Élysées, with a lake on which were held regattas and round which were walks with seats placed about ; also a large concert-room with excellent music, as the orchestra was a fine one and many of the best singers were to be heard there.

A flight of steps led up to the portico which was the entrance to this concert hall, and was the favourite lounge of the idle, dissipated young men of fashion, who would stand there in groups, making insolent remarks upon the women who came in and out. One evening as Lisette was coming down the steps with her mother, the Duke of Orléans, afterwards the infamous Philippe-Égalité, stood there with the Marquis de Genlis, both making outrageous remarks to annoy whoever

passed them. To the relief of Lisette, however, the Duke, as he pointed her out to his friend, only remarked in a loud voice :

“ Ah ! there is nothing to be said against that one.”

A fashionable promenade was the *boulevard du Temple*, where every day, especially Thursdays, hundreds of carriages were to be seen driving up and down or standing under the shade of trees now replaced by houses, shops, and *cafés*. Young men rode in and out amongst them, notorious members of the *demi-monde* tried to surpass every one in the splendour of their dress and carriages. A certain Mlle. Renard had her carriage drawn by four horses, their harness studded with imitation jewels. It was not an age of imitation. In those days as a rule lace was real lace, jewels were real jewels, and if tawdry imitations and finery were worn it was by women of this class. Respectable people would never have dreamed of bedizening themselves with the sort of cheap rubbish with which the modern women of the lower classes delight to disfigure their houses and their dress.

On one side of the *boulevard* were rows of chairs on which sat many old ladies of fashion, highly rouged, according to the privilege of their class. For only women of a certain rank were allowed to wear it. There was also a garden with seats raised one above the other, from which people could see the fireworks in the evenings.

The odious step-father, whose name by the by, was Jacques François Le Sèvre, was annoyed at the universal admiration excited by the beauty of his wife and step-daughter. At one time he tried to

put a stop to their walks, and told them he had hired a country place where they would go from Saturday till Monday during the summer.

Lisette rejoiced at this announcement, for she fancied she would like to live in the country, at any rate for a part of the year.

But when they saw the place, which was at Chaillot, it was a miserable little house in a still more miserable little garden, without a tree or any shelter from the sun except a deplorable looking arbour against which nothing would grow properly, while in the next plots of ground were shop boys shooting at birds according to the odious fashion one still sees in the south.

Lisette was in despair when she saw it, but fortunately some friends of her mother's came one Sunday to dine there with them, and were so shocked that they used often to fetch her away and take her out with them on long excursions to all the parks, *châteaux*, and delightful places in the neighbourhood.

The one she liked best was Marly-le-Roi, a royal palace entirely destroyed in the Revolution. It was then an abode of enchantment, and she always spoke with rapture of the *château* with its six pavilions, its trellised walks covered with jasmin and honeysuckle, its fountains, cascades, canal, and pools upon which floated tame swans, its lawns shaded by enormous trees, its terraces and statues, everything recalling Louis XIV. Here for the first time she saw Marie Antoinette, then Dauphine, walking in the gardens with several of her ladies, all dressed in white.

Lisette and her mother were turning back, but the Dauphine stopped them, and speaking in the kindest manner to them begged them to continue their walk wherever they liked.

In 1802 Mme. Le Brun revisited this enchanting place, or rather the ground where it used to be. It was entirely swept away; only a stone marked the spot where had been the centre of the *salon*.

When the summer came to an end they gave up their visits to the horrible little villa, to the infinite joy of Lisette and her mother.

CHAPTER III

Brilliant success of Lisette—Love of her art—The Vernet—Life in Paris before the Revolution—Mme. Geoffrin—Marriage of Lisette to M. Le Brun—A terrible prediction.

IN after life Mme. Le Brun used to say that her girlhood had not been like that of other young girls. And indeed it was not. By the time she was fifteen she was already not only a celebrated portrait painter, but very much sought after in society. A portrait of her mother, which she painted when she was not yet fifteen, excited so much admiration that the Duchesse de Chartres, who had often looked at her with interest from the gardens of the Palais Royal, opposite which she lived, sent for her to paint her portrait, and was so delighted with the pretty, gentle girl whose talents were so extraordinary that she spoke of her to all her friends.

The beautiful Comtesse de Brionne and her daughter, the Princesse de Lorraine, who was also very pretty, then came to call on her, and their visit was followed by those of all the court and *faubourg Saint Germain*. She also knew all the great artists

and literary people, and had more invitations than she could accept.

In her brilliant career, although the odious step-father was still a great disadvantage and annoyance, it was impossible that he could inflict much of his company upon her, full and absorbed as her life now was with her professional work and social engagements. The most celebrated foreign visitors to Paris generally came to see her, amongst the first of whom were Count Orloff, one of the assassins of Peter III., whose colossal height and the enormous diamond in his ring seem to have made a great impression upon her; and Count Schouvaloff, Grand Chamberlain, who had been one of the lovers of the Empress Elizabeth II., but was now a man of sixty, extremely courteous, pleasant, and a great favourite in French society.

Her first great dinner-party was at the house of the sculptor Le Moine, where she met chiefly artists and literary people. It was the custom to sing at dessert, a terrible ordeal for young girls, whose alarm often spoilt their song, but who were obliged to sing all the same.

Joseph Vernet had a little son of whose talent for drawing he was very proud; and one day at a party where his friends joked him on his infatuation, he sent for the child, gave him a pencil and paper, and told him to draw.

He began at once to draw a horse so well and so boldly that murmurs arose.

"Well! Very well! But he has begun too low down, he will have no room for the legs."

The boy, however, drew on with unconcern, finished the body of the horse, drew the upper portion of the legs, and then with a few strokes of the pencil indicated water at the bottom of the sheet, and gave the impression of a horse bathing his legs and feet.¹

But as dinner-parties then took place in the day-time, often as early as two o'clock, Lisette soon found it impossible to spare the time to go to them. What finally decided her to give them up was an absurd *contretemps* that happened one day when she was going to dine with the Princesse de Rohan-Rochefort. Just as she was dressed in a white satin dress she was wearing for the first time, and ready to get into the carriage, she, like her father in former days, remembered that she wished to look again at a picture she was painting, and going into her studio sat down upon a chair which stood before her easel without noticing that her palette was upon it. The consequences were of course far more disastrous than what had befallen her father; it was impossible to go to the party, and after this she declined as a rule all except evening invitations, of which she had even more than enough.

These evening parties were usually delightful; those of the Princesse de Rohan-Rochefort were especially so. The intimate friends of the Princess, the Comtesse de Brionne, Princesse de Lorraine, Duc de Choiseul, Duc de Lauzun, Cardinal de Rohan, and M. de Rulhières, a distinguished lite-

¹ "Carle" or Charles Vernet, son of the landscape and marine painter Joseph, was a figure painter and father of Horace Vernet the battle painter.

rary man, were always present, and other pleasant and interesting people were to be met there.

The evenings were spent in brilliant conversation and music, supper was at half-past ten, ten or twelve guests being the usual number at the table.

It speaks well for Lisette that her head was not the least turned and her reputation blameless, considering that at an age when girls in our own day are at their lessons in the schoolroom, she, young, pretty, attractive, and celebrated, was constantly thrown into a society the most corrupt and the most fascinating that has perhaps ever existed.

But although fully enjoying the amusement and admiration that fell to her lot, she passed unscathed through the temptations and dangers around her. The strength and devotion of her religious principles, the deep love of her art, which was the ruling passion of her life, her affection for her mother, who was always with her, and to whom she confided all her affairs, were her only safeguards.

She was constantly surrounded by perils and temptations which to many would have been irresistible. Admiring eyes followed her at the theatre, people crowded round her in the gardens and places of entertainment, men of rank who wanted an opportunity of making love to her had their portraits painted by her for that purpose; but she treated them all with indifference, and when she noticed that their looks and glances were too expressive she would coolly remark: "I am painting your eyes now," or would insist on the portrait being done with the eyes looking in another direction.

The Marquis de Choiseul had just married a very pretty American of sixteen years old, which did not prevent his entertaining a violent passion for Lisette, and trying to make love to her on all possible occasions, but greatly increased her indignation at his doing so.

In fact she had given her whole heart to her work. She thought and dreamed of nothing but painting, her career as an artist was her life, and her affection for her mother, her brother, and her friends sufficed for her domestic happiness; she wanted neither love intrigues nor even marriage to disturb the state of things she found so entirely satisfactory.

So little did the idea of love enter into her life that until after her marriage she had never read a single novel. Then she read "Clarissa Harlowe," by way of a beginning, and found it intensely interesting. Before, she only read lives of the Saints, and various religious or instructive books.

It is difficult for those who are accustomed to think of Paris only as it is now, to picture to themselves at all what it was like in the eighteenth century; for until years after the Revolution it was, to all intents and purposes, a mediæval city.

Paris without the wide streets of enormous houses, the broad, shady boulevards, the magnificent shops and crowded pavements, the glare and wealth and luxury of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Paris of old France, of the Monarchy, with its ancient towers and buildings, its great *hôtels* and convents with vast gardens above whose high walls rose stately trees; its narrow, crooked, ill-paved

streets, mostly unsafe to walk in after dusk, through which troops of cavalry clattered in gay uniforms, scattering the foot-passengers right and left, and magnificent coaches drawn by four, six, or eight horses lumbered heavily along.

The *fêtes* and pageants of the Church and court were most gorgeous and impressive. Even to see the King, royal family and court set off for Versailles, Fontainebleau, or any other of the country palaces was a splendid spectacle, the immense number of state coaches which conveyed the King,¹ the Dauphin,² Mesdames de France,³ their numerous households and those of the other Princes of the blood, made a procession which seemed interminable. It was the custom that on these occasions the court should be in full dress, and Mme. Le Brun, in her "Souvenirs," mentions that a few years later, after her marriage, she went to see the last of these departures in state for Fontainebleau, and observes that the Queen, the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, covered with diamonds which flashed in the sunshine, and with her regal air and majestic beauty, looked like a goddess surrounded by her nymphs.⁴

The Parisians delighted in any shows or festivities, and the royal family were received with acclamations whenever they appeared from the mob, which twenty years later was yelling and howling with savage fury for their destruction.

¹ The Queen, Marie Leczińska, died 1768.

² Grandson of Louis XV., afterwards Louis XVI. His father the Dauphin, died 1765.

³ Daughters of Louis XV.

⁴ "Souvenirs de Mme. Vigée Le Brun," t. I, p. 48.

Arnault, in his memoirs, relates that he was brought up at Versailles, where he was at school from 1772 to 1776, and often saw Louis XV. pass in his carriage. The King had a calm, noble face and very thick eyebrows. He took not the slightest notice of the shouts of *Vive le roi* from the boys drawn up in a line, or from the people; neither did Louis XVI. when he succeeded him.

A post in one of the royal households was an object of general ambition. Duruflé, though a poet and well-known literary man who had received a prize from the Academy, applied for and obtained the appointment of *valet de chambre* to the young Comte de Provence, second grandson of the King, afterwards Louis XVIII., and was in consequence obliged to put on his stockings, in doing which he accidentally hurt him.

“How stupid you are!” cried the young prince, angrily.

“I did not know, Monsieur,” replied he, “that one was stupid because one did not put on a stocking well.”

“People are stupid,” answered the prince, “who have not the sense to do properly what they undertake to do.”

Duruflé, who did not like this sort of thing, hastened to sell the post he had been so anxious to get.¹

Most people at that time, like those before the flood, had no idea of the possibility of the coming destruction.

Only the encyclopædists and such persons of advanced opinions had any presentiments of the

¹ “Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire” (Arnault).

overwhelming changes at hand, and they were far from anticipating the horrible calamities and crimes they were helping to bring about.

Their great stronghold was the *salon* of Mme. Geoffrin, where all the radical, atheist, and philosophic party congregated. D'Alembert, Condorcet, Turgot, Diderot, Morellet, Marmontel, and many other celebrated names were amongst the intimate friends of the singular woman, who although possessing neither rank, beauty, talent, nor any particular gift, had yet succeeded in establishing a *salon* celebrated not only in France but all over Europe. Owing to her want of rank she could not be presented at court, and yet amongst her guests were many of the greatest names in France, members of the royal family, strangers of rank and distinction. She knew nothing of art or literature, but her Monday dinners and evenings were the resort of all the first artists of the day, and her Wednesdays of the literary and political world.

Her *salon* had been famous from 1750, before Lisette was born, and now, as an old woman, she came to visit the young girl of whose artistic genius she had heard enough to excite her curiosity. She arrived in the morning and expressed great admiration for the beauty and talent of her young hostess.

To Lisette she seemed to be about a hundred years of age, though she was not really very old, but her costume, a dark grey dress and a cap over which she wore a large hood tied under her chin, and her bent figure, increased the appearance of age.

Mme. Geoffrin[†] was born 1699: her father a

[†] Marie Thérèse Rodet.

valet de chambre of the Dauphin. He and her mother died young and left her and her brother to the guardianship of their grandmother, a certain Mme. Chemineau, a woman of strong, upright character, and a devout Catholic, but narrow and without much education. She brought up her grandchildren with care and affection, and married the girl when about fourteen to M. Geoffrin, a rich and worthy commercial man of forty-eight. With him Thérèse lived in tranquil obscurity until she was about thirty, when she became acquainted with the celebrated Mlle. Tencin, sister of the Cardinal, over whose house and *salon* she presided, and who, like Mme. Geoffrin, lived in the *rue St. Honoré*.

M. Geoffrin did not altogether approve of his wife's perpetual presence at the *hôtel Tencin*, which had by no means a good reputation ; and when she also began to receive in her own house a few of the literary men whom she met there, philosophers, freethinkers, and various persons upon whom he looked with suspicion, he at first strongly objected. But it was useless. His wife had found the sixteen years of her married life remarkably dull ; she had at length, by good fortune, discovered the means of transforming her monotonous existence into one full of interest, and the obscurity which had hitherto been her lot into an increasing celebrity. She turned a deaf ear to his remonstrances, and after a good deal of dissension and quarrelling the husband gave way and contented himself with looking after the household and being a silent guest at the famous dinners given by his wife, until at length, on some one asking her what had become of the old gentle-

man who was always there and never spoke, she replied—

“It was my husband; he is dead.”

Although stupid, M. Geoffrin was harmless, good, and charitable. Their only child, the Marquise de la Ferté Imbault, adored her father, whom she preferred to her mother. She was a pretty, high-spirited girl, an ardent Catholic, hated her mother's atheist friends, and always declared that she had forced her into her marriage, which, although a great, was not a happy one.

When Lisette was about twenty, her step-father retired from business and took an apartment in the *rue de Cléry* in a large house called *hôtel Lubert*, which had recently been bought by the well-known picture dealer, M. Le Brun.

Lisette was enchanted at this, as she knew that M. Le Brun had rooms full of the most splendid pictures of all the different schools, to which she would thus have constant access. And her anticipations were more than realised, for M. Le Brun was completely fascinated by her, and only too delighted not only to show her the pictures, but to lend her any she liked to copy.

For six months she worked with enthusiasm, perfectly happy and engrossed with her painting, never noticing that her landlord, who was a good-looking, pleasant, but exceedingly dissipated man, was paying her great attention, having fallen violently in love with her.

It was therefore a surprise, and not altogether an agreeable one, when at the end of the six months he asked for her mother's consent to marry her.

Lisette at first wished to refuse this offer. She did not at all dislike M. Le Brun, but she was by no means in love with him, and as she could make plenty of money by her profession, she had no anxiety about the future and no occasion to make a *mariage de convenance*. But her mother, who seems to have had the talent for doing always the wrong thing, and who fancied that M. Le Brun was very rich, did not cease to persecute her by constant representations and entreaties not to refuse such an excellent *parti*, and she was still more influenced by the desire to escape from her step-father, who, now that he had no occupation, was more at home and more intolerable than ever.

So after much hesitation she consented, but so reluctantly, that even on her way to the church where the marriage was to be celebrated,¹ she still doubted and said to herself, "Shall I say Yes or No?" The wedding, however, took place, and she even agreed to its being a private one, and being kept secret for some time, because M. Le Brun was engaged to the daughter of a Dutchman with whom he had considerable dealings in pictures, and whom he continued to deceive in this matter until their business affairs were finished.

The dishonourable nature of this transaction does not seem to have occurred either to her mother or to Lisette herself. She was rather glad to keep her own name a little longer, but not at all pleased when, it being rumoured that she was engaged to M. Le Brun, everybody began to warn her on no account to marry him.

¹ January 11, 1776.

M. Auber, jeweller to the Crown, said: "You had better fasten a stone to your neck and throw yourself into the river than marry Le Brun."

The Duchesse d'Aremberg, Mme. de Canillac, and Mme. de Souza, then Ambassadors to Portugal, all young and pretty, all friends of Lisette's, came to warn her not to marry the man whose wife she had already been for a fortnight.

"In Heaven's name don't marry him," cried the Duchess. "You will be miserable."

And they proceeded to tell her a number of stories, many of which she did not believe, until she found out to her cost that they were true; but which, nevertheless, filled her mind with uneasy suspicions; while her mother sat by with tears in her eyes, repenting of the new folly by which she had again ruined the happiness of her child.

However, there was no help for it. The marriage was shortly acknowledged, and Lisette, whose mind was full of her painting, did not allow her spirits to be depressed; more especially as M. Le Brun, although he gambled and ran after other women, was not disagreeable or ill-tempered like her step-father, from whose odious presence she was now set free. Her husband spent all the money she made, and even persuaded her to take pupils, but she did not much mind. She never cared about money, and she made great friends with her pupils, many of whom were older than herself. They put up a swing, fastened to the beams in the roof of the studio, with which they amused themselves at intervals during the lesson.

During the March that followed the marriage a

kind of mission or religious revival went on at Paris ; a sort of wave of religious devotion seemed to have arisen in opposition to the atheism and irreligion of the day. Notre Dame and most of the other churches were thronged during the frequent services, religious processions passed through the streets amidst excited crowds, friars preached and people knelt around them regardless of the bitterly cold weather. Strange to say, one of those who fell victims to their imprudence was Mme. Geoffrin, who, in spite of her infidel friends and surroundings, had never really abandoned her belief in God, or the practice of her religious duties, but had always gone secretly to mass, retained a seat in the Church of the Capucines, and an apartment in a convent to which she occasionally retired to spend a retreat. A chill she got at this mission brought on an attack of apoplexy, and she remained partly paralysed during the remaining year of her life. Her daughter, the Marquise de la Ferté Imbault, took devoted care of her, refusing to allow any of her infidel friends to visit her, and only admitting those whose opinions were not irreligious.

There was at this same time a perfect rage for fortune-telling, second sight, and every sort of occult knowledge and experiences.

The Comtesses de Flahault and de Marigny, two sisters, both young, thoughtless, and eager for adventures, were anxious to see and consult a certain wizard, then very much the fashion, about whom their curiosity was greatly aroused by the stories told of him.

It was not altogether easy in those days for two women of their age and class to go out unattended and unseen, and if they had been discovered it would have caused gossip and scandal. So one dark night they disguised themselves as grisettes, put on large cloaks with hoods and let themselves out through a side door in the garden of the *hôtel*. After a long walk they arrived, very tired and rather frightened, at a dirty house in a bad quarter, on the fifth floor of which the wizard lived. They rang a dirty-looking bell, a dingy servant appeared with a smoky lamp, and led them into a dimly-lighted room adorned with deaths' heads and other weird-looking symbols. As they looked round them with misgiving a concealed door suddenly opened and the wizard stood before them dressed in a long flame-coloured robe, with a black mask, and began to make passes in the air with an ivory wand, using strange words they could not understand, while blue sulphur flames played around him.

The two sisters clung to each other in terror, but the man, who saw quite well that they were no grisettes, came forward respectfully, saying to Mme. de Marigny, "Alas! Mme. la Comtesse, why consult destiny? It is pitiless. Nothing will succeed with you; you will die young."

With a cry of alarm she tried to draw her sister away, but the wizard, taking her hand, seemed to study it carefully, and suddenly dropped it with a strange exclamation.

"Speak," said the Comtesse de Flahault. "Speak! Whatever my future is to be, let me know it. Tell

me. I have strength and courage to hear. Besides, who can assure me that what you say is true?"

"Have you then such a love of falsehood, Madame, that you must have it at any price? Poor woman! she has not the courage to say she believes and fears."

"Well, yes! I believe and am afraid. Will you speak now?"

The sorcerer hesitated, and only after much persuasion said slowly and gravely—

"Monsieur le Comte, your husband, will lose his head on the scaffold; you will leave France to live without resources in a foreign land; you will work for your living, but after long years of exile you will return to France. You will marry an ambassador, but you will have other vicissitudes."

Such prophecies in the height of their prosperity seemed so absurd that they laughed, gave the wizard a large fee, and returned home, thinking the whole adventure very amusing.

However, the predictions were fulfilled. Mme. de Marigny, after many misfortunes, died young. The Comte de Flahault was guillotined during the Terror, and the Comtesse escaped with her son to England, where she lived in great poverty in a village near London, until a friend of hers, the Marquis —, also an *emigré*, suggested to her that she should write a novel. That same night she began "Adèle de Senanges," which she sold for £100 to a publisher in London, and after which she continued by her writing to support herself and

educate her boy at a good English school. When she returned to France she lived at a small *hôtel* in an out-of-the-way part of Paris until she married M. de Souza, the Portuguese Ambassador.



Madame Vigée Le Brun
MARIE ANTOINETTE, QUEEN OF FRANCE

CHAPTER IV

Marie Antoinette—Birth of Mme. Le Brun's daughter—The Royal Family—Brussels—Antwerp—The charms of French society—The Opera ball—An incident in the Terror—A Greek supper—*Le jeu de la Reine.*

IN 1779 Mme. Le Brun painted for the first time the portrait of the Queen, then in the splendour of her youth and beauty.

Marie Antoinette was tall, well-formed, with perfectly shaped arms, hands and feet, a brilliant complexion, bluish-grey eyes, delicate though not regular features, a charming expression and a most imposing air, which very much intimidated Mme. Le Brun during the first sitting. But the kindness and gentleness with which the Queen talked to the young artist soon set her at ease, and when the portrait, which was to be presented to the Emperor Joseph II., was finished, she was desired to make two copies of it; one to be sent to the Empress Catherine of Russia, the other to be placed in the royal apartments, either at Versailles or Fontainebleau. After these she painted several portraits of the Queen, one of which, in a straw hat, was, when exhibited in the Salon, 1786, declared by one of those malicious slanders then becoming frequent, to be the Queen *en chemise.*

There was by this time a perfect rage to be painted by Mme. Le Brun. At a performance at the Vaudeville, called "La Réunion des Arts," Painting was represented by an actress made up into an exact copy of Mme. Le Brun, painting the portrait of the Queen.

Mme. Le Brun was present, having been expressly invited to the box of some friends who wanted to surprise her, and was deeply gratified and touched when all the audience rose and turned towards her with enthusiastic applause.

Her first child, the only one that lived, was born in February, 1780.

Her extraordinary carelessness about everything but her painting, caused her to make no sort of preparations for this event; and even the day her child was born, although feeling ill and suffering at intervals, she persisted in going on working at a picture of Venus binding the wings of Love.

Mme. de Verdun, an intimate friend of hers, came to see her in the morning, and regarding her with disapprobation, asked whether she had got everything ready that she would require; to which Lisette, still occupied with her picture, replied with a look of astonishment that she did not know what she would require.

"There you are exactly!" cried her friend; "you are just like a boy. Well, I warn you that you will be confined this evening."

"No! No!" exclaimed Lisette, "I have a sitting to-morrow. I shan't be confined to-day."

Mme. de Verdun said no more, but went away and sent the doctor. Lisette dismissed him, but he

remained concealed in the house until night. The child was born about ten o'clock, and Lisette was at once passionately fond of it, and as unfortunately foolish in her management of it as she was in the way she conducted all her affairs except her painting. She indulged and spoilt it in so deplorable a manner that she ruined her daughter's disposition and her own comfort and happiness.

She had another daughter a year or two later that only lived a short time.

Mme. Le Brun took the greatest pleasure in her intercourse with the Queen. Having heard that she had a good voice and was passionately fond of music, Marie Antoinette asked her to sing some of the duets of Grétry with her ; and scarcely ever afterwards did a sitting take place without their playing and singing together.

Besides all these portraits of the Queen, Mme. Le Brun painted the King, all the rest of the royal family except the Comte d'Artois ; the Duke and Duchess of Orléans, the Princesse de Lamballe, the Duchesse de Polignac, and, in fact, almost everybody.

Louis XVI., who liked talking to her about her pictures, said one day—

“I know nothing about painting, but you make me like it.”

The last time Marie Antoinette ever sat to her was at Trianon, when she painted her head for the great picture in which the Queen is represented with her children, the first Dauphin,¹ Madame Royale,² and the Duc de Normandie,³ which was

¹ Died 1789.

² Afterwards Duchesse d'Angoulême.

³ Afterwards Dauphin and then the unfortunate Louis XVII.

hung in the Salon of 1788, and excited universal admiration. It was afterwards taken to Versailles and hung in one of the *salons* through which the Queen always passed on her way to mass.

After the death of her eldest boy, the sight of this picture so affected the Queen that she had it removed, taking care to explain to Mme. Le Brun that this was done only because she could not bear to see it, as it so vividly recalled the child whose loss was at that time such a terrible grief to her.

The days were rapidly approaching when she would be thankful that an early death had saved him from the fate of his brother.

In 1782 business took M. Le Brun to Flanders, and his wife, who had never travelled, was delighted to accompany him.

They began by attending the sale of a magnificent collection of pictures at Brussels, and were received with great kindness and attention by the Princesse d'Arenberg, Prince de Ligne, and many of the most distinguished persons in society.

The Prince de Ligne invited them to see his splendid gallery of pictures, chiefly Rubens and Vandyke; they also visited him at his beautiful country place, and after enjoying themselves in Brussels, which was extremely gay, they made a tour in Holland. Mme. Le Brun entered with enthusiasm into all she saw. The quiet, ancient towns of North Holland, with their quaint streets of red-roofed houses built along canals, with only such narrow pavements on each side that no carts or carriages could come there, traffic being carried on by the great barges and boats gliding down the



ANTWERP

E. H. Bearne

To face page 49

canals, or on foot and on horseback as the pavements permitted ; and Amsterdam with its splendid pictures ; after seeing which they returned to Flanders to look again at the masterpieces of Rubens in public and private collections.

The most important part of the tour to Mme. Le Brun was her visit to Antwerp, then a mediæval city of extraordinary beauty and interest, which have only, in fact, of comparatively recent years been destroyed by the vandalism of its inhabitants. So striking was its appearance, with its walls, gates, and forest of towers rising from the broad Scheldt, that Napoleon, enchanted with its beauty, said it looked like an Arab city, and he gazed upon it with admiration.

The walls and fortifications were demolished within the last fifty years, and before and since then many a beautiful historic tower and gateway, many a lovely old house and interesting bit of architecture has vanished before the destroying mania of a stupid town council devoid of either education to comprehend or taste to appreciate and preserve the characteristic beauty which, if they had carefully restored and maintained all that was possible of the old, and carried out the new buildings in harmony with them, would have made their city the pearl of Belgium, as Nuremberg is of Germany.

But what to Mme. Le Brun was of great importance during her stay at Antwerp was a portrait by Rubens, the famous *Chapeau de Paille*, then in a private collection, where she saw and was fascinated by it. The effect of light and shade caused by the arrangement of the two different lights, the ordinary

light and the sunlight, was what chiefly struck her, and having studied the picture with deep attention she proceeded, on returning to Brussels, to paint her own portrait with the same kind of effect : wearing a straw hat with a wreath of wild flowers, and holding a palette in her hand.

It had great success at the Salon, was engraved by Müller, and was one of those amongst her works which decided Joseph Vernet, shortly after her return, to propose her as a member of the Royal Academy of Painting. She was duly elected, in spite of the opposition of M. Pierre, who was painter to the King, and a very bad painter too.

The following lines were circulated by Mme. Le Brun's friends upon the occasion :

" Au salon ton art vainqueur
Devrait être en lumière
Pour te ravir cet honneur,
Lise, il faut avoir le cœur
De Pierre, de Pierre, de Pierre."

Mme. Le Brun now worked so hard that she made herself ill, often having three sittings a day, and she soon became so thin and out of health that her friends interfered, and by order of the doctor she henceforth, after working all the morning and dining in the middle of the day, took a *siesta*, which she found invaluable all her life. The evenings were always devoted to society.

She still lived in the *rue de Cléry*, where M. Le Brun had a large, richly furnished apartment, but as he used nearly the whole of it as a picture gallery, his wife had only two simply furnished rooms for herself, which, however, on her at-home nights

were thronged with everybody of any distinction, either at court or in the town, in fact, so great was the crowd that people were to be seen sitting on the floor, from which, on one occasion, the Maréchal de Noailles, being very old and fat, could hardly be got up again.

Such brilliant assemblies are not to be seen in these days. Not only the great political and social personages, but all the celebrated literary and scientific men, poets, painters, composers, musicians, and actors, were to be found there, and the music was the best to be heard in Paris.

Often the composers Grétry, Sacchini and Martini had portions of their operas performed there before their first representation at the theatre, the singers were Garat, Asvédo, Richer, Mme. Todi, and many well-known amateurs. Cramer and Hummel played the piano, Salentin the hautbois, Viotti, Jarnovick, Maestrino, and Prince Henry of Prussia the violin.

In those days, as Mme. Le Brun remarks in one of her letters, "people had both time and inclination to amuse themselves," and the love of music was just then so strong and so general that the disputes between the rival schools of Glück and Piccini sometimes even amounted to quarrels. She herself was a Glückist, but the Queen and many others preferred the Italian music to the German.

The four women who were her most intimate friends, and were always to be found at her parties, were the Marquise de Grollier, Mme. de Verdun, the Marquise de Sabran, and Mme. le Couteux du Molay. Of the rest of her numerous acquaintances

she would ask a few at a time to the suppers she constantly gave. People arrived about nine o'clock, they amused themselves with conversation, music, or acting charades, supper was at ten and was extremely simple. As it was not considered necessary to give costly entertainments on every occasion, people of moderate and small fortune were able to receive and amuse their friends as often as they liked, without half-ruining themselves. A dish of fish, a chicken, a salad, and a dish of vegetables was the supper Mme. Le Brun usually provided for the twelve or fifteen people who were her guests, but those who went to these parties really amused themselves.

“No one can judge of what society in France was,” wrote Mme. Le Brun in her old age, “who has not seen the times when after the affairs of the day were finished, twelve or fifteen agreeable people would meet at the house of a friend to finish the evening there.”

The ease and gentle gaiety which pervaded these light evening repasts gave them a charm which was never found in a dinner-party ; there was a kind of intimacy and confidence amongst the guests, who, being perfectly well-bred people, knew how to dispense with all formality and restraint.

Society was much smaller, people knew each other, or at any rate knew much more about each other, than could be the case after the revolution. The Comte d'Espinchal was the most extraordinary instance of this essentially social life. He passed his days and nights in going from one party or visit to another ; he knew all about everything going

on, important or trivial. He appeared to know every one not only at the parties to which he went, but in all the boxes at the Opera, and nearly everybody he met in the streets, so that it was quite inconvenient for him to walk in them, as he was stopped every minute. Not only people at court and in society, but grisettes, employés of the theatres, persons of every class ; but though a perfect mine of gossip, he never made mischief.

One evening he was at the Opera ball, then frequented by people in good society. Masked or not, they were equally known to M. d'Espinchal, who as he walked through the rooms saw a man whom he actually did not know, wandering about with distracted looks. He went up to him, asking if he could be of any use, and was told by the perplexed stranger that he had just arrived from Orléans with his wife, who had insisted on coming to the Opera ball, that he had lost her in the crowd, and that she did not know the name of the *hôtel* or street where they were. "Calm yourself," said M. d'Espinchal, "Madame, your wife is sitting by the second window in the *foyer*. I will take you to her," which he did. The husband overwhelmed him with thanks and asked how he could possibly have known her.

"It is perfectly simple," replied the Count. "Madame being the only woman at the ball whom I did not know, I concluded she had just arrived from the provinces."

Balls were not then the crushes they afterwards became. The company was not nearly so numerous ; there was plenty of room for those who were not

dancing to see and hear what was going on. Mme. Le Brun, however, never cared for dancing, but preferred the houses where music, acting, or conversation were the amusements. One of her favourite *salons* was that of the *chargé d'affaires* of Saxony, M. de Rivière, whose daughter had married her brother Louis Vigée. He and her sister-in-law were constantly at her house. Mme. Vigée acted very well, was a good musician, and extremely pretty. Louis Vigée was also a good amateur actor; no bad or indifferent acting would have been tolerated in the charades and private theatricals in which Talma, Larive, and Le Kain also took part.

And so the time passed, each day full of interest and pleasure, in the gayest and most delightful capital in the world; while the witty, charming, light-hearted society who sang and danced and acted and talked so brilliantly, felt, for the most part, no misgivings about the future, no doubt that this agreeable, satisfactory state of things would go on indefinitely, although they were now only a very few years from the fearful catastrophe towards which they were so rapidly advancing, and in which most of them would be overwhelmed. Death, ruin, exile, horrible prisons, hardships, and dangers of all sorts were in store for them, and those who escaped by good fortune, by the devotion or kindness of others, and occasionally by their own courage, foresight, or presence of mind, met each other again years afterwards as if they had indeed passed through the valley of the shadow of death.

Amongst the latter was the singer Désaugiers, a friend of Grétry, well known for his quick and

ready answers. Being still in Paris during the Terror, although never of Republican opinions he was obliged, of course, to wear the tricolour cockade. One day he forgot to put it on and presented himself without it at the gate of the Tuileries in order to go into the gardens, but was brusquely stopped by the official, who asked why he was not wearing it ; while a crowd of sinister faces at once began to gather round him. Désaugiers saw his danger, but with his usual presence of mind showed neither fear nor confusion. Taking off his hat he looked at it slowly with an air of surprise, saying as if to himself—

“It is true ! I have not my *cocarde* ! No doubt I must have forgotten it and left it on my nightcap.”

Most of the rabid mob believed him to be so fanatical a republican that he wore the tricolour by night as well as by day ; a few, who guessed the truth, admired his presence of mind and let him escape.

Poppo, the celebrated violinist, was also seized and dragged before the bloodthirsty *comité de salut public*.

“Votre nom ?” †

“Poppo.”

“Votre profession ?”

“Je joue du violon.”

“Que faisiez-vous au temps du tyran ?”

† “Your name ?”

“Poppo.”

“Your profession ?”

“I play the violin.”

“What did you do in the time of the tyrant ?”

“Je jouais du violon.”

“Que faites vous maintenant ?”

“Je joue du violon.”

“Et que ferez-vous pour la nation ?”

“Je jouerai du violon.”

Wonderful to say, he was acquitted.

It was only to be expected that her brilliant success, both professional and social, would expose Lisette to a considerable amount of gossip, scandal, and jealousy, the usual penalty of distinction of any kind; and she was constantly being annoyed by some false accusation or preposterous story being circulated about her.

Amongst other absurd inventions it was reported that she had given a supper in the Greek style which had cost twenty thousand francs. This story had been repeated first at Versailles, then at Rome, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, by which time the sum mentioned had risen to eighty thousand francs.

The truth was that this famous supper, which did take place, cost about fifteen francs, and consisted of a chicken and a dish of eels, both dressed after Greek recipes, taken from the “*Voyages d'Anacharsis*,” which Louis Vigée had been reading to his sister; two dishes of vegetables, a cake made of honey and little currants, and some old Cyprus wine, which was a present to her.

“I played the violin.”

“What do you do now ?”

“I play the violin.”

“And what shall you do for the nation ?”

“I shall play the violin.”

—“*Salons d'Autrefois*” (de Bassanville).

The idea was suddenly suggested to the brother and sister by the book they were reading, and as she expected several people to supper, she arranged the rooms with draperies after the ancient Greek fashion, borrowed from the Comte de Parois, who lived in the house and had a collection of Greek things, all the vases, pitchers, pots, and cups she wanted, arranged the table in the same style, and as her friends arrived, proceeded to dress them one after another in Greek costumes, which she took from the mass of costumes and draperies in her studio.

The poet Le Brun-Pindare, dressed in a long purple cloak, represented Anacreon. The other guests were M. and Mme. Vigée, her brother, M. de Rivière, Mme. Chalgrin, daughter of Joseph and sister of Charles Vernet, Mme. de Bonneuil and her pretty child, afterwards Mme. Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely, the Marquis de Cubières, the Comte de Vaudreuil, M. Boutin, M. Ginguéné, and the famous sculptor Chaudet.

Mme. Le Brun was asked by several persons of importance to repeat this supper, but always declined.

That the Marquis de Cubières was present proved to be fortunate, as the King, vexed by the reports he heard of the enormous expense of this supper, spoke to him about it and was promptly undeceived.

However, in the earlier days of Marie Antoinette, especially while she was still Dauphine, the play that went on at court, and in which she took a conspicuous part, was high enough to give rise to grave scandal.

The Queen was in the habit of playing *pharaon* every evening, and on one occasion she noticed that M. de Chalabre, who kept the bank, whilst he was picking up the money of those who had lost, took advantage of a moment when he thought nobody was looking, to put a *rouleau* of fifty louis into his pocket.

When every one was leaving she signed to him to remain, and when they were alone said to him—

“Monsieur de Chalabre, I wish to know why you took from the game to-night a *rouleau* of fifty louis?”

“A *rouleau*, Madame!”

“Yes, Monsieur; you put it into the right-hand pocket of your coat.”

“Since your Majesty saw me, I must inform the Queen that I removed that *rouleau* of gold because it is false.”

“False! Your proof, Monsieur?”

Taking the *rouleau* out of his pocket, he tore the envelope and showed that it was lead skilfully worked.

The Queen turned pale.

“Did you notice who put it on the table?” she asked.

M. de Chalabre at first denied, but on the Queen's insisting confessed that it was the young Comte de ——, whose father was an ambassador, and was then abroad. The Queen desired him to keep the affair secret, and the next evening when the young Count approached the tables she said, smiling—

“Monsieur le Comte, I promised Madame, your mother, to take you under my guardianship during

her absence. Our play is too high for a young man ; you will play no more *pharaon* at Court."

The lad understood, blushed crimson, and retired, profoundly grateful for being let off so easily. Neither was the lesson lost upon him ; after this he played no more.[†]

[†] "Salons d'Autrefois" (Bassanville).

CHAPTER V

The theatre—Raincy—Chantilly—Calonne—Attempt to ruin the reputation of Mme. Le Brun—Two deplorable marriages—Fate of Mme. Chalgrin—Under the shadow of death—Mme. Du Barry.

THE theatre was a passion with Mme. Le Brun, and all the more interesting to her from her friendships with some of the chief actors and actresses, and her acquaintance with most of them, from the great geniuses such as Talma, Mlle. Mars, and Mlle. Clairon to the *débutantes* like Mlle. Rancourt, whose career she watched with sympathetic interest. For Mme. Dugazon, sister of Mme. Vestris and aunt of the famous dancer Vestris, she had an unmixed admiration; she was a gifted artist and a Royalist heart and soul. One evening when Mme. Dugazon was playing a *soubrette*, in which part came a duet with a valet, who sang :

“J’aime mon maître tendrement,”

to which she had to answer :

“Ah, comme j’aime ma maîtresse ;”

as she sang these words she laid her hand upon

her heart and, turning to the Queen's box, bowed profoundly. As this was in the beginning of the Revolution, there were many who wished to revenge themselves in consequence, and tried to force her to sing one of the horrible revolutionary songs which were then to be heard constantly upon the stage. She refused indignantly, and left the theatre. Her husband, Dugazon, the comic actor, on the contrary, played an atrocious part during the Revolution. Although he had been loaded with benefits by the royal family, especially the Comte d'Artois, he was one of those who pursued them to Varennes. Mme. Le Brun was told by an eye-witness that he had seen this wretch at the door of the King's carriage with a gun upon his shoulder.

It was impossible to spare much time to be absent from Paris, but Mme. Le Brun often spent two or three days at the magnificent *châteaux* to which she was invited, either to paint a portrait or simply as a guest.

For the former reason she spent some time at Raincy,¹ then the residence of the Duke of Orléans, father of Philippe-Égalité, where she painted his portrait, and that of his morganatic wife, Mme. de Montesson. While she was there the old Princesse de Conti came one day to see Mme. de Montesson, and much to her surprise always addressed Mme. Le Brun as "Mademoiselle." As it was shortly before the birth of her first child, this rather startled her, and she then recollected that it

¹ Raincy was afterwards bought by Junot, Duc d'Abrantès, who sold it again to Napoleon.

had been the custom in former days for grandees of the court so to address their inferiors. It was a survival that she never met with but upon this occasion, as it had quite come to an end with Louis XV. Mme. Le Brun never cared to stay at Raincy, which she found uncongenial; but she delighted in several of the other *châteaux* where she stayed, above all in Chantilly, where the Prince de Condé gave the most magnificent *fêtes*, and where the grandeur of the *château* and the beauty of the gardens, lakes, and woods fascinated her.

Another place at which she liked staying was Gennevilliers, which belonged to the Comte de Vaudreuil, a great friend of hers, and one of the subjects of malicious gossip about her. Gennevilliers was not so picturesque as the other places, but there was an excellent private theatre. The Comte d'Artois and all his society always came to the representations there.

The last at which Mme. Le Brun was present was the *Mariage de Figaro*, played by the actors of the Comédie Française; but, as she observes in one of her letters, Beaumarchais¹ must have intolerably tormented M. de Vaudreuil to induce him to allow the production of a piece so improper in every respect. Dialogue, couplets, all were directed against the court, many belonging to which were present, besides the Comte d'Artois himself. Everybody was uncomfortable and embarrassed except Beaumarchais² himself, who had no manners and

¹ The author of the play.

² Beaumarchais was the son of a watchmaker born at Paris 1732. His talent for music led to his giving lessons to *Mesdames de*

was beside himself with vanity and conceit, running and fussing to and fro, giving himself absurd airs, and when some one complained of the heat, breaking the windows with his stick instead of opening them.

Shortly after this he called upon the Comte de Vaudreuil at Versailles one morning just after he was up, and confided to him a financial scheme by which he expected enormous profit, ending by offering M. de Vaudreuil a large sum of money if he would undertake to make it succeed.

The Count listened quietly to all he said, and then replied—

“Monsieur de Beaumarchais, you could not have come at a more favourable moment; for I have had a very good night, I have a good digestion, and I never felt better than I do to-day. If you had made me such a proposal yesterday I should have had you thrown out of the window.”

Another of the people declared to be in love with Mme. Le Brun, and about whom there was so much gossip as to cause her serious annoyance, was M. de Calonne, the brilliant, extravagant, fascinating Finance Minister of Louis XVI.¹

What made this all the more provoking was that M. de Calonne was not even, like M. de Vaudreuil,

France. He made a fortune by his financial talents, and was famous as an author. He wrote “The Marriage of Figaro,” “The Barber of Seville,” &c., was a freethinker, revolutionist, and at first member of the Commune of Paris; but he fell out of favour, was ruined, imprisoned in the Abbaye during the Terror, narrowly escaped with his life, and died some years afterwards.

¹ Son of the President of the Parliament of Flanders. He rose, it is said, by questionable means to a high position in finance.

a great friend of hers. She did not know him at all intimately, and in fact only once went to a party given by him at the *Ministère des finances*, and that was because the *soirée* was in honour of Prince Henry of Prussia, who was constantly at her house. The splendid portrait she painted of Calonne was exhibited in the Salon of 1786. Mlle. Arnould remarked on seeing it, "Mme. Le Brun has cut his legs off to keep him in the same place," alluding to the picture being painted to the knees.

All sorts of preposterous stories were circulated about it and about them. Some said M. de Calonne had given Mme. Le Brun a number of bonbons, called *papillottes*, wrapped up in bank-notes; others that she had received in a pasty a sum of money large enough to ruin the treasury: the truth being that he had sent her, as the price of his portrait, four thousand francs in notes in a box worth about twenty louis, and this was considered by no means a high price for the picture. M. de Beaujon had given her eight thousand francs for a portrait of the same size a short time before, without anybody finding the least fault. The character of Calonne was such that no woman who cared about her reputation would wish her name to be connected with his.

The first step in his rapid rise he is said to have owed to having left about some compromising papers of his friend Chalotais on a bureau, where they were found, and the disclosure of their contents caused the ruin and imprisonment of Chalotais and others, about the year 1763. After this he continued to prosper financially, politically, and



Madame Vigée Le Brun

CHARLES ALEXANDRE DE CALONNE

To face page 65

socially, until another intrigue raised him to the height of power.

He was deeply in love with Mme. d'Harvelay, whose husband was the banker and intimate friend of M. de Vergennes, then Foreign Minister. Mme. d'Harvelay, who returned his passion and carried on a secret *liaison* with him, used her influence with her husband to induce M. de Vergennes to push him on. The husband, who was fascinated by Calonne and did not know or suspect what was going on, was persuaded by his wife one day to write a confidential letter to Vergennes on the subject of the general alarm then beginning to be felt about the disastrous state of the finances and the peril threatening the Monarchy itself, in which he declared Calonne to be the only man who could save the situation. The Court was then at Fontainebleau, and it was contrived that this letter should be shown to the King in the evening, after he had retired to supper with his family.

Next day the destinies of France were in the hands of Calonne.

Dissipated, unscrupulous, with no money and owing 200,000 *écus*, the new *Contrôleur-général des Finances* found an empty treasury, an enormous mass of debt, alarm and perplexity in the Government, and gathering fury and suspicion amongst the populace.

As to the plans he proposed to meet this grave state of affairs, Louis Blanc declares that his frivolity was only upon the surface,¹ and that his designs were wise, bold, and strongly conceived. Other

¹ " Histoire de la Révolution Française " (Louis Blanc).

historians assert that he had no plan at all except to borrow money, spend it, and then borrow more.

However that might be, he spent enormous sums, lavished money upon the Princes and the Queen, for whom Saint Cloud was bought, and to whom he said upon one occasion—

“Madame, si c'est possible c'est fait ; si c'est impossible, cela ce fera.”¹

He and Vergennes were said to have wasted the revenues of France, but at any rate he spent money like a gentleman, and when, in 1787, he was dismissed from office, he did not possess an *écu*.

He was one of the earliest to emigrate, and at Coblentz he met his old love, Mme. de Harvelay, now a rich widow and willing to marry him. He spent her fortune, and later on tried to get employment under Napoleon, who would have nothing to do with him, and he died in comparative obscurity.

The royalist sympathies and associations of Mme. Le Brun made her particularly obnoxious to the Radical party, to whom lies and calumnies were all welcome as weapons to be used against political opponents. She was therefore assailed by shoals of libels, accusing her of a *liaison* with M. de Calonne, by people who were absolutely unknown to her.

One Gorsas, a violent Radical whom she had never seen or heard of, was especially violent in the atrocities he poured forth against her for no reason whatever. He was a political writer and afterwards a Jacobin, but met with his due reward, for he was

¹ Alluded to in letter from the Queen to Mercy d'Argenteau, in the Archives of Vienna.

arrested by the Revolutionists he admired so greatly, and guillotined.

M. Le Brun was just then building a house in the *rue Gros-Chenet*, and one of the reports spread was that M. de Calonne paid for it, although both M. and Mme. Le Brun were making money enough to afford themselves much greater expenditure than that.

Lisette complained bitterly to her husband, who only told her to let them talk, and treated the matter with indignant contempt.

But Lisette fretted and made herself unhappy, especially when a deliberate attempt was made to destroy her reputation by a certain Mme. S——, who lived in the *rue Gros-Chenet*, to which she herself had not yet removed.

Mme. S—— was carrying on a *liaison* with Calonne, who was very much in love with her and very often at her house; she was also sitting for her portrait to Mme. Le Brun, who looked upon her as a pretty, gentle, attractive woman, but thought the expression of her face rather false.

One day, while she was sitting to Mme. Le Brun, Mme. S—— asked her to lend her carriage to her that evening to go to the theatre. Mme. Le Brun consented, but when she ordered the carriage next morning at eleven o'clock she was told that neither carriage, horses, nor coachman had come back. She sent at once to Mme. S——, who had passed the night at the *hôtel des Finances* and had not yet returned: It was not for some days that Mme. Le Brun made this discovery by means of her coachman, who had been bribed to keep silent, but

had nevertheless told the story to several persons in the house.

It was, of course, obvious that this was done in order that the carriage and servants of Mme. Le Brun being seen at night at the *hôtel des Finances*, the scandal might be diverted from Mme. S—— to the innocent owner of the carriage.

Whether this dastardly trick was done out of mere spite and envy, or only in order to save the reputation of the guilty woman at the expense of the innocent one, Mme. Le Brun never knew, and of course had no more communication with the person in question.

Mme. Vigée, or rather Mme. le Sèvre, had certainly, by her obstinate folly, succeeded in ruining first her own life, then her daughter's; for the two deplorable marriages she had arranged, both of them entirely for mercenary reasons, had turned out as badly as possible. Her own was the worst, as the husband she had chosen was the more odious of the two men, and she had no means of escaping from him; but Lisette's was disastrous enough.

M. le Brun, though neither disagreeable nor ill-tempered, was impossible on account of the dissipated life he led. Always running after other women, always gambling and in debt, spending not only his own money but all his wife's earnings, another woman would have left him or led a miserable life. Not so Lisette. She lived in his house on friendly terms with him, though their marriage had long been one only in name.

She cared so little for money, and her dress, her

entertainments and requirements were so simple, that she let him spend all she earned ; whilst her occupations, professional and social, were so engrossing, and her life so full of interest, excitement, and enjoyment, that she was content to make the best of things and let her husband go his way, while she followed her own career among the friends and pursuits she loved.

Besides the immense number of her friends and acquaintance of later years, she kept up faithfully those of her early days. Her old fellow student, Mlle. Boquet, had given up the profession in which she was getting on so well, and married a M. Fil-leul, whom the Queen had made her *concièrge de la Muette*.¹

With the Vernet family, too, she was on intimate terms. The landscape painter, Joseph Vernet, was always a kind friend to her. His son Charles, or Carle, as he was called, was also an artist, and his daughter Émilie, the wife of M. Chalgrin, was constantly at her house.

The Vernet² were staunch Royalists, and watched with horror and dread only too well justified the breaking out of the Revolution.

Carle was a captain in the *garde nationale*, and lodged with his family in the Louvre when, on the 10th of August, 1792, the mob attacked the Tuileries. As the windows began to break and the shots to rattle round them it was evident that they were all in great danger. Carle caught up in his arms his youngest child, Horace,³ then three

¹ One of the royal *châteaux*.

² "Les Trois Vernet."

³ Afterwards the celebrated painter.

years old, and mounted his horse, his wife accompanying him carrying their little daughter.

As he rode across the Carrousel Carle was a conspicuous mark for the mob, who took him for one of the Swiss guards, as he had unfortunately taken off his uniform, and not having time to put it on, was wearing a white vest with a red collar. He was several times fired at, and wounded in the hand, but succeeded in reaching a place of safety with his wife and children.

His sister *Émilie* was not so fortunate. Arrested upon some frivolous pretext, she was thrown into prison. In desperate anxiety Carle flew to David, who, though a terrorist himself, was a comrade and friend of his, and would surely use his influence to help them. David, however, either could or would do nothing; *Mme. Chalgrin* was dragged before the revolutionary tribunal, convicted of having corresponded with the princes, condemned, and executed.

One of David's most rising pupils before the Revolution was young *Isabey*, son of a peasant of *Franche Comté*, who had made money and was rich.

Old *Isabey* had a passion for art, and having two boys resolved to make one a painter, the other a musician; and as *Louis*, the elder one, was always scribbling upon walls and everywhere figures of all sorts, his father, regardless of the fact that the drawings were not at all good, assured his son that he would be a great artist, perhaps painter to the King; and as the younger boy, *Jean-Baptiste*,[†] was

[†] *Jean-Baptiste Isabey*, b. at Nancy, 1767.

constantly making a deafening noise with trumpets, drums, castagnettes, &c., he decided that he should be a musician.

As the lads grew older, however, their talents developed in exactly opposite directions, so that their father found himself obliged to consent to a change of plans with regard to their education. Louis, in fact, became ultimately first violinist to the Emperor Alexander of Russia, while Jean-Baptiste, casting aside his noisy musical instruments, studied painting with enthusiasm, went to Paris in 1786, and with much difficulty succeeded in getting into the studio of David, from which he was shortly afterwards on the point of being expelled, because he made a picture of David as a wild boar, surrounded by his pupils in the form of little pigs ; all excellent likenesses.

Having no money young Isabey supported himself at Paris by making designs for snuff-boxes and buttons. The Comte d'Artois saw the buttons, which had become very much the fashion, admired them, and desired that Isabey should be presented to him. He was also presented to the Comtesse d'Artois, rapidly got commissions, painted portraits of different members of the royal family and court, and was becoming more and more prosperous when the Revolution broke out, and he was apparently ruined.

One day he and other pupils of David had the fancy to spend an idle hour in listening to the debates in the *Assemblée*, where every one went in and out at their pleasure.

But they were very little edified by what they

heard and saw. The Abbé Maury was speaking, and the outrageous behaviour, the rows and quarrels, the discreditable manner in which the discussions were carried on, so shocked them that they allowed their disgust to be more apparent than was prudent.

Presently they observed a strange, ugly-looking man, who was watching them with a mocking smile.

"What gives you the right to laugh at us, Monsieur?" asked one of them, with irritation.

"Your youth, *mes amis*; and above all your *naïveté*. Laws are like sauces: you should never see them made."

He bowed and turned away; it was Mirabeau.

The acquaintance thus begun was a fortunate one for Isabey. In despair at the disappearance of the court and apparently of his own chance of getting on with his profession, he was thinking of giving it up. Mirabeau advised him to stick to it and gave him the commission to paint his own portrait.

He persevered accordingly, passed safely through the Revolution, and was a favourite court painter during the Empire and Restoration.

One dark, gloomy day, during the height of the Terror, he was sitting in his studio early in the morning, busily making up the fire in his stove, for it was bitterly cold. There was a knock at the door, and a woman wrapped in a large cloak stood on the threshold, saying—

"You are the painter, Isabey?"

"Yes. What do you want of me?"

"I want you to do my portrait at once."

“*Diable!* At once? You are in great haste,” said he, smiling.

“It is not I who am in haste; it is the guillotine,” replied the stranger. “To-day I am on the suspected list, to-morrow I shall no doubt be condemned. I have children. I wish to leave them a remembrance of me, that is why I come to ask you to paint my portrait. Will you?”

“I am ready, Madame,” he said, beginning at once to prepare his palette and brushes. “In what costume do you wish to be painted?”

“In this,” she answered; and throwing off her hood and cloak, he saw a woman still young and pretty, her hair powdered and covered with a simple little cap, a grey silk dress, green apron, high-heeled shoes, and a *carton* in her hand.

“I am Mme. Venotte,” she went on. “I had the honour to be *marchande de dentelles* to *la sainte reine* whom they have sent to God. I wish my children always to see me in the costume I used to wear when Marie Antoinette deigned to admit me to her presence.”

Though he painted this portrait in haste, with tears in his eyes, it was one of the best ever done by Isabey.¹

In 1786 Mme. Le Brun received an invitation to paint the portrait of Mme. Du Barry, the once lovely and all powerful favourite of Louis XV. With great curiosity she went down to the *château* of Louveciennes, given to his mistress by the late King, where she still lived in luxury but almost in solitude, for of the courtiers and acquaintances who

¹ “Salons d'Autrefois” (Ctsse. de Bassanville).

had crowded round her in the days of her prosperity scarcely any remembered her now.

Louveciennes[†] was near Marly and Versailles. The *château* built by Louis XV. was in a delightful park, but there was a melancholy feeling about the whole place.

The career of Jeanne Vaubernier, Comtesse Du Barry, was a most extraordinary one. Her father was a workman, and she, after being a milliner's apprentice for some years, lived under the name of Mlle. Lange, in a house of bad fame, where she became the mistress of Count Jean Du Barry, who in 1769 presented her to Louis XV., who was deeply fascinated by her wonderful beauty, and over whom, after having gone through the form of marriage with the brother of Jean Du Barry, she reigned supreme during the remainder of his life. But her day of power and splendour was only a short one, for the King died five years afterwards (1774), when she was, of course, immediately obliged to leave the court and live in retirement; probably much sooner than she expected, for Louis XV. was only sixty-three when he fell a victim to smallpox. The twelve years had been spent in her *château*, where the Duc de Brissac took the place of his royal predecessor.

Mme. Du Barry received Mme. Le Brun with the greatest politeness and attention; she was now about forty-two, and still extremely handsome. The brilliant beauty of her complexion had begun to fade, but her face was still charming, her features

[†] Or Luciennes.

beautiful, her figure tall and well-made, and her hair fair and curled like that of a child.

Her way of living was very simple; she walked about the park summer and winter, visited the poor, to whom she was most kind and generous, wore muslin or cambric dresses, and had very few visitors. The only two women who came much to see her were Mme. de Souza, the Portuguese Ambassador, and the Marquise de Brunoy. M. de Monville, a pleasant, well-bred man, was frequently there, and one day the Ambassador of Tippoo Sahib arrived to visit her, bringing a present of a number of pieces of muslin richly embroidered with gold, one of which she gave to Mme. Le Brun. The Duc de Brissac was of course there also, but, though evidently established at the *château*, there was nothing either in his manner or that of Mme. Du Barry to indicate anything more than friendship between them. Yet Mme. Le Brun saw plainly enough the strong attachment which cost them both their lives.

Under her own room, which looked out towards Marly, Mme. Le Brun discovered a gallery in which were huddled together all sorts of magnificent marbles, busts, vases, columns, and other costly works of art, the relics of former grandeur.

Every day after dinner, they had their coffee in the splendid pavilion of Louis XV. It was decorated and furnished with the greatest luxury and magnificence, the chimney-piece, doors, and locks were precious works of art.

The first time they entered it Mme. Du Barry said, "It was in this room that Louis XV. used to

do me the honour to dine. There was a tribune above for the musicians who played and sang during dinner."

Mme. Le Brun generally spent the evening alone with Mme. Du Barry by the fireside. The latter would sometimes talk of Louis XV. and his court, always with respect and caution. But she avoided many details and did not seem to wish to talk about that phase of her life. Mme. Le Brun painted three portraits of her in 1786, 1787, and in September, 1789. The first was three-quarters length, in a *peignoir* with a straw hat; in the second, painted for the Duc de Brissac, she was represented in a white satin dress, leaning one arm on a pedestal and holding a crown in the other hand. This picture was afterwards bought by an old general, and when Mme. Le Brun saw it many years later, the head had been so injured and re-painted that she did not recognise it, though the rest of the picture was intact.

The third portrait Mme. Le Brun retained in her own possession—for she had begun it in September, 1789, when the terrors of the Revolution were beginning. As she painted at Louveciennes they could hear the thunder of the cannonades, and the unfortunate Mme. Du Barry said to her—

"If Louis XV. were alive all this would certainly not have happened."

When she had painted the head and sketched out the arms and figure, Mme. Le Brun was obliged to go to Paris. She intended to come back to finish her work, but she found the murder of Foulon and Berthier had just taken place, and the state of



Painted by herself

MADAME LE BRUN ET SA FILLE

To face page 76

affairs was so alarming that her one object was to get out of France. The portrait fell into the hands of Count Louis de Narbonne, who restored it to her on her return—when she finished it.

The fate of Mme. Du Barry is well known. She escaped to England where she was kindly received, and where the great value of her diamonds enabled her to live quite well herself, and also to help many of the *émigrés*, to whom she was most generous. But the Duc de Brissac had remained concealed at Louveciennes, and she insisted on going back to him. The friends she made in England pointed out the danger of doing so, and did all they could to dissuade her—they even unharnessed the horses of her travelling carriage. It was all useless, she would go. Soon after her return to Louveciennes the Duc de Brissac was seized and carried away from her to be taken to Orléans. On the way he and his companions were attacked and murdered by the mob and his head brought to Mme. Du Barry. Then she herself was betrayed and denounced by a little negro named Zamore, who was in her service, and had been loaded with benefits and kindness by Louis XV. and by herself. In consequence of the denunciation of this wretch she was thrown into prison, tried, and executed at the end of 1793.

In all those terrible days she was the only woman whose courage failed at the last. She cried and entreated for help from the crowd around the scaffold, and that crowd began to be so moved by her terror and despair that the execution was hurried on lest they should interfere to prevent it.

Mme. Le Brun, alluding to this circumstance,

remarks that in all probability the very heroism and calmness of the victims helped to prolong this horrible state of things.

“I have always been persuaded,” she says in one of her letters, “that if the victims of that time of execrable memory had not had the noble pride to die with courage, the Terror would have ceased much sooner. Those whose intelligence is not developed have too little imagination to be touched by silent suffering, and it is much easier to arouse the compassion than the imagination of the populace.

CHAPTER VI

End of the *ancien régime*—Foretaste of the Revolution—Threatened—Resolves to emigrate—Another alarm—Preparations—"You are wrong to go"—A terrible journey—Safe across the frontier.

THE year 1788 was the last of the old *régime*. Mme. Le Brun was now thirty-two and at the height of her fame and prosperity. She had more commissions than she could execute, more engagements than she could keep, more invitations than she could accept, but her mind was full of gloomy presentiments. She passed the summer as usual between Paris and the country houses where she stayed.

As she drove with a friend down to Romainville to stay with the Comte de Ségur, she noticed that the peasants they met in the roads did not take off their hats to them, but looked at them insolently, and sometimes shook their sticks threateningly at them.

While she was at Romainville there was a most awful storm, the sky which had become deep yellow with black clouds of alarming appearance, seemed to open and pour forth flash after flash of lightning, accompanied by deafening thunder and enormous hailstones, which ravaged the country for forty leagues round Paris. Pale and trembling, Mme. de

Ségur and Mme. Le Brun sat looking at each other in terror, fancying that they saw in the awful tempest raging around them, the beginning of the fearful times whose approach they now foresaw.

When the storm had subsided the peasants were crying and lamenting over the destruction of their crops, and all the large proprietors in the neighbourhood came most generously to their assistance. One rich man distributed forty thousand francs among them. The next year he was one of the first to be massacred.

As time went on and affairs became more and more menacing, Mme. Le Brun began to consider the advisability of leaving the country, and placing herself and her child out of the reach of the dangers and calamities evidently not far distant.

Early in 1789 she was dining at La Malmaison, which then belonged to the Comte de Moley, a rabid Radical; he and the Abbé de Sieyes and several others were present, and so fierce and violent was their talk that even the Abbé de Sieyes said after dinner—

“Indeed, I think we shall go too far;” while the Comtesse du Moley and Mme. Le Brun were horror-stricken at the terrible prospects unfolded to them.

After this, Mme. Le Brun went for a few days to Marly to stay with Mme. Auguier, sister of Mme. Campan, and attached like her to the Queen’s household.

One day as they were looking out of a window into the courtyard which opened on to the road, they saw a man stagger in and fall down.

Mme. Auguier sent her husband’s *valet de chambre*

to help him up, and take him into the kitchen. Presently the *valet* returned, saying, "Madame is indeed too kind ; that man is a wretch. Here are some papers which have fallen out of his pocket." He gave them several sheets of papers, one of which began, "Down with the Royal Family ! down with the nobles ! down with the priests !" and all of which were filled with a tissue of blasphemies, litanies of the Revolution, threats and predictions horrible enough to make their hair stand on end.

Mme. Auguier sent for the *maréchaussé*, four of whom appeared, and took the fellow in charge ; but the *valet de chambre* who followed them unperceived, saw them, as soon as they thought themselves out of sight, singing and dancing, arm in arm with their prisoner.

Terror-stricken, they agreed that these papers must be shown to the Queen, and when, a day or two afterwards, Mme. Auguier was in waiting, she took them to Marie Antoinette, who read and returned them saying—

"These things are impossible. I shall never believe they meditate such atrocities."

Mme. Auguier's affection for the Queen cost her her life. In the fury of the Revolution, knowing her to be without money, she lent Marie Antoinette twenty-five *louis*. This became known, and a mob rushed to her house to take her to prison and execution. In a frenzy of terror Mme. Auguier threw herself out of the window, and was killed on the spot.¹

¹ Her daughters were brought up by her sisters Mesdames Campan and Rousseau at the celebrated school of the former ; one married Marshal Ney.

The last time Mme. Le Brun saw the Queen was at the last ball given at Versailles, which took place in the theatre, and at which she looked on from one of the boxes. She observed with indignation the rudeness of some of the young Radical nobles ; they refused to dance when requested to do so by the Queen, whose agitation and uneasiness were only too apparent. The demeanour of the populace was becoming every day more ferocious and alarming ; the drives and streets were scarcely safe for any but the lower classes. At a concert given by Mme. Le Brun, most of the guests came in with looks of consternation. They had been driving earlier in the day to Longchamps, and as they passed the *barrière de l'Étoile*, a furious mob had surrounded and insulted everybody who passed in carriages. Villainous looking faces pressed close to them, horrible figures climbed on to the steps of the carriages, crying out, with infamous threats and brutal language, that next year they should be in the carriages and the owners behind them.

The continual terror in which she now lived began to affect the health of Lisette. She knew perfectly well that she herself was looked upon with sinister eyes by the ruffians, whose blood-thirsty hands would soon hold supreme power in France. Her house in the *rue Gros-Chenet*, in which she had only lived for three months, was already marked ; sulphur was thrown down the grating into the cellars ; if she looked out of the windows she saw menacing figures of *sans-culottes*, shaking their fists at the house.

If she had not got away in time there can be no

doubt as to what would have been her fate ; fortunately her fears made her act with prudence. M. Brongniart, the architect, and his wife, friends of hers, seeing her so pale and altered, persuaded her to go and stay with them for a few days at the Invalides, where they had rooms ; she gladly accepted and was taken there by a doctor attached to the Palais Royal, whose servants wore the Orléans livery, the only one that was now respected, and in whose carriage she consequently arrived safely. Her kind friends nursed and tried to comfort her ; made her take Bordeaux and soup as she could eat nothing, and tried to reassure her, being amongst those who did not believe in the perils to come. It was no use. When they went out they heard the threats and violent talk of the mob, and the discussions they held with each other ; by no means calculated to give comfort to those who were listening.

Mme. Le Brun returned home, but dared not stay there, so she accepted the invitation of her brother's father-in-law, M. de Rivière, in whose house she thought she would be safe, as he was a foreign minister. She stayed there a fortnight, treated as if she were a daughter of the house, but she had resolved to get out of France before it was too late.

It would in fact have been folly to stay any longer ; already the mob had set fire to the *barrière* at the end of the *rue Chaussée-d'Antin*, where M. de Rivière lived, and had begun to tear up the pavement and make barricades in the streets. Many people disapproved of emigrating, some from patriotic

reasons, others as a matter of interest. To many it was of course a choice between the certainty of losing their property and the chance of losing their lives; and rather than become beggars they took the risk and stayed, very often to the destruction of themselves and those dearest to them. To Lisette there was no such alternative. Wherever she went she could always provide herself with money without the least difficulty; she had always longed to see Rome, now was the time.

She had numbers of orders, and of portraits half finished, but she was too nervous and agitated to paint, and she had a hundred *louis* which some one had just paid for a picture—to herself fortunately, not to M. Le Brun, who generally took everything, sometimes never even telling her it had been paid, at other times saying he must have the whole sum for an investment, or to pay a bill owing.

This hundred *louis* would take her to Rome with her child and nurse, and she began in haste to pack up and prepare for the journey.

It was the evening before the day fixed for their departure, the passport was ready, her travelling carriage loaded with luggage, and she was resting herself in her drawing-room, when a dreadful noise was heard in the house, as of a crowd bursting in; trampling of feet on the stairs, rough voices; and as she remained petrified with fear the door of the room was flung open and a throng of ruffianly-looking *gardes nationaux* with guns in their hands, many of them drunk, forced their way in, and several of them approaching her, declared in coarse, insolent terms, that she should not go.

In reply to her observation that she had a perfect right to go where she chose, they kept repeating—

“Vous ne partirez pas, citoyenne, vous ne partirez pas.”

At last they went away, but in a few moments two of them whose appearance was different from the rest returned and said—

“Madame, we are your neighbours; we have come back to advise you to go, and to start as soon as possible. You cannot live here, you are so changed that we are sorry. But do not travel in your carriage; go by the diligence, it is safer.”

Lisette thanked the friendly *gardes* with all her heart, and followed their advice. She sent to take three places in the diligence, but there were none to be had for a fortnight, as so many people who were emigrating travelled by it for greater safety.

Those of her friends who were Radicals blamed Lisette for going, and tried to dissuade her. Mme. Filleul, formerly Mlle. Boquet, said to her—

“You are quite wrong to go. I shall stay, for I believe in the happiness the Revolution will bring us.”

She remained at La Muette until the Terror began. Mme. Chalgrin, of whom she was an intimate friend, came there to celebrate very quietly the marriage of her daughter. The day after it, both Mme. Chalgrin and Mme. Filleul were arrested by the revolutionists and guillotined a few days later, because they were said to have “burnt the candles of the nation.”

Lisette paid no attention to the dissuasions of her friends; in spite of all they said she knew quite well that she was in danger. No one could be safe, however innocent, if any suspicion or grudge against

them was in the minds of the ruffians who were thirsting for blood.

“Although, thank Heaven, I have never done harm to anybody,” she said. “I agree with the man who said : ‘They accuse me of having stolen the towers of Notre Dame ; they are still in their place, but I am going, for it is clear that they have a grudge against me.’ ”

“What is the use of taking care of one’s health ?” she would say when her friends were anxious about her. “What is the good of living ?”

It was not until the 5th of October that the places in the diligence could be had, and on the evening of the 4th Lisette went to say goodbye to her mother, whom she had not seen for three weeks, and who at first did not recognise her, so much had she changed in that short time and so ill did she look.

They were to start at midnight, and it was quite time they did so.

That very day the King, Queen, and royal family were brought from Versailles to Paris by the frantic, howling mob. Louis Vigée, after witnessing their arrival at the *Hôtel de Ville*, came at ten o’clock to see his sister off, and give her the account of what had happened.

“Never,” he said, “was the Queen more truly a Queen than to-day, when she made her entry with so calm and noble an air in the midst of those furies.”

It was then she made her well-known answer to Bailly, “*J’ai tout vu, tout su, et tout oublié.*”

Half beside herself with anxiety and fear for the fate of the royal family and of all respectable people, Lisette, her child, and the nurse or nursery

governess went to the diligence at midnight, escorted by M. Le Brun, Louis Vigée, and M. Robert, the landscape painter, an intimate friend of theirs, who never left the diligence, but kept close to its doors as it lumbered along through the narrow dark streets to the *barrière du Trône*. For the terrible *faubourg Saint Antoine* had to be passed through, and Lisette was dreadfully afraid of it.

However, it happened on that night to be unusually quiet, for the inhabitants had been to Versailles after the King and Queen, and were so tired that they were asleep.

At the barrier came the parting with those she was leaving in the midst of perils. When they would meet again, if they ever did at all, it was impossible to guess.

The journey was insupportable. In the diligence with them was a dirty, evil-looking man, who openly confessed that he was a robber, boasting of the watches, &c., that he had stolen, and speaking of many persons he wished to murder *à la lanterne*, amongst whom were a number of the acquaintances of Mme. Le Brun. The little girl, now five or six years old, was frightened out of her wits, and her mother took courage to ask the man not to talk about murders before the child.

He stopped, and afterwards began to play with her; but another Jacobin from Grenoble, also a passenger, gave vent to all kinds of infamous and murderous threats and opinions, haranguing the people who collected round the diligence whenever they stopped for dinner or supper; whilst every now and then men rode up to the diligence,

announcing that the King and Queen had been assassinated, and that Paris was in flames. Lisette, terrified herself for the fate of those dear to her, tried to comfort her still more frightened child, who was crying and trembling, believing that her father was killed and their house burnt. At last they arrived safely at Lyon, and found their way to the house of a M. Artaut, whom Lisette did not know well. But she had entertained him and his wife in Paris on one or two occasions, she knew that their opinions were like her own, and thought they were worthy people, as indeed they proved to be.

They did not know her at first, for besides her altered looks she was dressed as an *ouvrière*, having just exhibited in the Salon her portrait which she had painted with her child in her arms, and fearing she might be recognised.

They spent three days in the Artaut family, thankful for the rest, the quietness and the kindness they received. M. Artaut engaged a man he knew to take them on their journey, telling him that they were relations of his, and recommending them to his care. They set off accordingly, and, this journey was indeed a contrast to the last. Their driver took the greatest care of them, and they arrived in safety at the bridge of Beauvoisin, the frontier of France.

Never, would Mme. Le Brun say in after years, could she forget or describe the feelings with which she drove across that bridge to find herself at the other side—safe, free, and out of France.

Henceforth the journey was a pleasure, and with

feelings of admiration and awe she gazed upon the magnificent scenery as she ascended the mighty Mont Cenis; stupendous mountains rising above her, their snowy peaks buried in clouds, their steep sides hung with pine forests, the roar of falling torrents perpetually in her ears.

"Madame should take a mule," said a postillion coming up to her, as she walked slowly up the precipitous mountain path. "It is much too tiring for a lady like Madame to go up on foot."

"I am an *ouvrière*," she replied, "and am accustomed to walk."

The man laughed.

"Ah!" he said, "Madame is no *ouvrière*; it is very well known who she is."

"Well, who am I, then?"

"You are Mme. Le Brun, who paints with such perfection, and we are all very glad to know that you are far away from those wicked people."

"I could never guess," said Lisette, "how the man knew me. But this proved the number of spies the Jacobins had everywhere. However, I was not afraid of them now; I was out of their execrable power. If I had no longer my own country, I was going to live where art flourished and urbanity reigned—I was going to Rome, Naples, Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg."

CHAPTER VII

Turin—Parma—The Infanta—Florence—Rome : Delightful life there—Artistic success—Social life—The French refugees—The Polignac—Angelica Kaufman—An Italian summer—Life at Gensan—The Duchesse de Fleury.

PASSING through Chambéry, the little party arrived at Turin in pouring rain, and were deposited late at night in a bad inn, where they could get nothing to eat ; but the next day the celebrated engraver, Porporati, insisted on their removing to his house, where they spent five or six days. At the Opera they saw the Duc de Bourbon and his son, the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, whose murder was the blackest stain upon the fame of Napoleon. The Duc de Bourbon looked more like the brother than the father of his son ; he was only sixteen when the Duc d'Enghien was born.

Taking leave of the excellent Signor Porporati and his daughter, they proceeded to Parma, where the Comte de Flavigny, Minister of Louis XVI., at once called upon Mme. Le Brun, and in his society and that of the Countess she saw everything at Parma. It was her first experience of an ancient,

thoroughly Italian city, for Turin cannot be considered either characteristic or interesting.

But the pictures and churches filled Lisette with delight, especially the masterpieces of Correggio, the glory of Parma.

In the huge mediæval palace the Infanta, sister of Marie Antoinette, held her court, and to her Mme. Le Brun was presented by M. de Flavigny.

Much older than the unfortunate Queen of France, and possessing neither her beauty nor charm, Mme. Le Brun did not take a fancy to her, although she received her very well. She was a strange person, with masculine manners and habits; her great pleasure apparently was riding. Very pale and thin, wearing deep mourning for her brother, the Emperor Joseph II., even her rooms being hung with black, she gave the impression almost of a spectre or a shadow.

After a few days at Parma, Lisette went on to Modena, Bologna, and Florence, under the escort of the Vicomte de Lespignière, a friend of M. de Flavigny, whose carriage kept close behind her own. As M. de Lespignière was going all the way to Rome—a journey not very safe for a woman with only a governess and child—this was an excellent arrangement; and they journeyed on pleasantly enough through Italy; the calm, sunny days, the enchanting scenes through which they passed, the treasures of art continually lavished around them, the light-hearted courtesy of the lower classes, the careless enjoyment and security of their present surroundings, contrasting strangely with the insolence and discomfort, the

discontent and bitterness, the gloom and terror from which they had so recently escaped.

They lingered for a while at Florence, unable to tear themselves away from that enchanting city, with its marvellous wealth of art and that beauty of its own, of walls and towers and palaces and ancient streets then undestroyed.

The long galleries of pictures and statues, the lovely churches filled with gems of art, the stately palaces and gardens, the cypress-crowned heights of San Miniato, and the whole life there, were enchanting to Lisette. She had been made a member of the Academy at Bologna; she was received with great honour at Florence, where she was asked to present her portrait to the city. She painted it in Rome, and it now hangs in the *Sala* of the great artists in the Uffizi. In the evening she drove along the banks of the Arno—the fashionable promenade, with the Marchesa Venturi, a Frenchwoman married to an Italian, whose acquaintance she had made. Had it not been for her anxiety about what was going on in France she would have been perfectly happy, for Italy had been the dream of her life, which was now being realised.

With reluctance she left Florence, but after all her supreme desire was Rome, and when at length in the distance across the plain over which they were travelling, the dome of St. Peter's rose before them, she could hardly believe she was not dreaming, and that Rome lay there. Through the *Porta del Popolo*, across the piazza, down the *Corso*, and up to the entrance of the French Academy they drove, and the long journey was finished.



IL PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE

E. H. Bearn

To face page 92

M. Ménageot, the Director, came out to the carriage, offered her a little apartment for herself, her child, and governess, and lent her ten louis, for she had not enough left to pay her travelling expenses. Then having installed her in her rooms, he went with her to St. Peter's.

The next day, just as she was starting for the Vatican Museum, the students of the Academy came to visit her, bringing her the palette of Drouais, a talented young painter whom she had known in Paris, and who had lately died. He had dined with her the evening before he started for Rome, and she was much touched at the recollection of him and at the request of the lads that she would give them some old brushes she had used.

It was necessary in the next place to look for a permanent abode, and this seemed to be difficult. The apartment in the French Academy was too small, though every one who knows Rome will understand what a temptation its magnificent situation must have been to stay there.

So she took rooms in the *Piazza di Spagna*, which is, of course, one of the most convenient and animated situations in Rome; but the noise, which never seems to inconvenience Italians, was insupportable to her. Carriages and carts, groups of people singing choruses, lovely in themselves, but distracting when they went on all night, made sleep impossible, and drove her to another dwelling, a small house in a quiet street which took her fancy. The whole house was so charming that, with her usual carelessness about money, she hastened to pay

the ten or twelve *louis* for the month's rent, and took possession. She went to bed rejoicing in the silence, only broken by the splash of a fountain in the little courtyard ; but in the middle of the night a horrible noise began which woke them all up and prevented any more sleep till the morning, when the landlady explained that there was a pump fastened to the wall outside, which was constantly being used by the washerwomen, who, as it was too hot to work in the day, began the washing at two o'clock in the morning. Accordingly Mme. Le Brun removed into a small palace, which she found damp and cold, as it had been uninhabited for nine years ; it was also infested by armies of rats. She stayed there six weeks and then moved, this time on condition of sleeping one night in the house before paying the rent ; but the beams of the ceilings were full of little worms, which gnawed all night long and made such a noise that she declared she could not sleep, and left the next day.

At last, in spite of her being unlucky or fanciful, or both, she succeeded in finding a dwelling-place, and as directly she arrived, visits and commissions began to pour upon her, she soon had plenty of money and plenty of society.

One of her first portraits was that of the Polish Countess Potocka who came with the Count, and directly he had gone away said to Mme. Le Brun : "That is my third husband, but I think I am going to get the first back again ; he suits me better, though he is a drunkard."

Lisette now settled down into that Roman life

which in those days was the most enchanting that could be imagined. M. Le Brun being no longer able to take possession of her money, she had enough for everything she wanted, and in fact during the years of her Italian career she sent him 1,000 *écus* in reply to a piteous letter, pleading poverty; and the same sum to her mother.

She had only to choose amongst the great personages who wanted their portraits painted; and she spent the time when she was not working in wandering amid the scenes to visit which had been the dream of her life. Ruins of temples, baths, aqueducts, tombs, and monuments of the vanished Empire, gorgeous churches and palaces of the Renaissance, huge never-ending galleries of statues and pictures, the glories of Greek and of mediæval art; Phidias and Praxiteles, Raffaelle, Michael Angelo, and Lionardo; the picturesque beauty of Rome, as it was then, the delicious gardens, since swept away by the greedy vandalism of their owners; the mighty Colosseum; the solemn desolate Campagna; all filled her mind and imagination and distracted her thoughts from France and the horrors going on there. At Rome in those days there certainly seemed to be everything that could be wished for to make life a paradise upon earth. Besides the natural beauty, the historical and archæological interest, and the treasures of art, the magnificence of the ecclesiastical functions, church services, stately processions, and entrancing music were a perpetual delight to her. "There is no city in the world," she wrote to a

friend, "in which one could pass one's time so deliciously as in Rome, even if one were deprived of all the resources of good society."

Among the new friends she found most interesting was Angelica Kaufmann, who lived in Rome, and whose acquaintance she had long desired to make. That distinguished artist was then about fifty years old; her health had suffered from the troubles caused by her unfortunate marriage with an adventurer who had ruined her earlier years. She was now the wife of an architect, whom Lisette pronounced to be like her *homme d'affaires*. Sympathetic, gentle, and highly cultivated, Lisette found her conversation extremely interesting, although the calmness and absence of enthusiasm in her character contrasted strongly with her own ardent, imaginative nature. She showed her several both of her finished pictures and sketches, of which Lisette preferred the latter, the colour being richer and more forcible.

Mme. Le Brun painted the portraits and went to the parties of the chief Roman families, but did not form many intimate friendships amongst them, for most of her spare time was spent with the unfortunate refugees from France, of whom there were numbers in Rome during the years she lived there. Many of them were her friends who had, like herself, managed to escape. Amongst these were the Duke and Duchess de Fitz-James and their son, also the Polignac family, with whom Mme. Le Brun refrained out of prudence from being too much seen, lest reports should reach France that she was plotting with them against

the Revolution. For although she was out of the clutches of the Radicals and Revolutionists her relations were still within their reach, and might be made to suffer for her.

However they were none of them in the same danger that she would have been had she remained at Paris. None of them were at all conspicuous, and as far as any one could be said to be tolerably safe in France under the new reign of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, they might be supposed to be so.

Amongst others who arrived were the Duchesse de Fleury and Princesse Joseph de Monaco. The latter was a gentle, charming woman, whose devotion to her children was the cause of her death. After having escaped from France and arrived safely in Rome, she was actually foolish enough to go back to Paris with the idea of saving the remains of her fortune for her children. The Terror was in full force; she was arrested and condemned. Those who wished to save her entreated her to declare herself *enceinte*, by which many women had been spared. She would anyhow have gained a reprieve, and as it happened her life would have been saved, as the ninth Thermidor was rapidly approaching. But her husband was far away, and she indignantly refused, preferring death to such an alternative.

Quite another sort of woman was the Duchesse de Fleury, with whom Lisette formed an intimate friendship. The Duchess, *née* Aimée de Coigny, was a true type of the women of a certain set at the old French court, and her history was one

only possible just at the time in which it took place.

Beautiful, both in face and form, imaginative, brilliant, and fascinating; with charming manners and lax morality, her passionate love of art and natural beauty attracted her to Lisette, who found in her the companion she had long wished for.

They spent their evenings at the Maltese embassy, where the *soirées* of the Ambassador, Prince Camilla de Rohan, Grand Commander of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, were frequented by all the most intellectual and distinguished people in Rome. They made excursions to all the enchanting places within reach—Tivoli, Tusculum, Monte Mario, the Villa Adriano, and many another ancient palace or imposing ruin; and when the hot weather made Rome insupportable, they took a house together at Gensano, and spent the rest of the summer in those delicious woods. They hired three donkeys to make excursions, and took possession with delight of the ancient villa which had belonged to Carlo Maratta, some of whose sketches might still be seen on the walls of one of its great halls.

All that country, Frascati, L'Ariccia, Castel Gandolfo, Albano, Gensano, is a dream of beauty and romance. Lakes, mountains, and forests, picturesque towns and villages perched high upon the steep sides of precipices, rocks crowned with ruined towers or convents, ancient villas like huge palaces, with colonnades, fountains, and loggie, buried among deep woods of ilex and chestnut, in whose cool shade they could spend the bright, hot, glowing days.

In the evenings they rode or walked, watching the gorgeous sunset and afterglow ; and in those radiant Italian nights, when the whole country lay white and brilliant under the light of the southern moon, they would wander through the woods glittering with glow-worms and fireflies, or perhaps by the shores of Lake Nemi, buried deep amongst wooded cliffs, a temple of Diana rising out of its waters.

The Duchesse de Fleury, who had attached herself with such enthusiastic affection to Mme. Le Brun, was scarcely sixteen, although in mind, character, and experience she was far older than her years.

Her mother having died in her early life, she was brought up by her father, the Comte de Coigny, at his *château* at Mareuil, an enormous place built by the celebrated Duchesse d'Angoulême (whose husband was the last of the Valois, though with the bend sinister), who died in 1713, and yet was the daughter-in-law of Charles IX., who died 1574.¹

Married when a mere child to the Duc de Fleury, great-nephew of the Cardinal, there was no sort of affection between her husband and herself, each went their own way, and they were scarcely ever in each other's society. He had also emigrated, but he was not in Rome, and Mme. Le Brun, who was very fond of her, foresaw with anxiety and

¹ Charles de Valois, Duc d'Angoulême, Comte d'Auvergne et Ponthieu, son of Charles IX. and Marie Touchet, b. 1572, m. 1644 second wife, Françoise de Mareuil.—“Early Valois Queens,” p. 6 (Bearne). “Créquy Souvenirs.”

misgiving the dangers and difficulties which were certain to beset one so young, so lovely, so attractive, and so unprotected, with no one to guide or influence her. Full of romance and passion, surrounded with admiration and temptation, she was already carrying on a correspondence, which could not be anything but dangerous, with the Duc de Lanzun, a handsome, fascinating *roué*, who had not quitted France, and was afterwards guillotined.

It is difficult to understand how anybody who had escaped from France at that time should have chosen to go back there, except to save or help somebody dear to them.

As Mme. Le Brun remarked in her own case: "It is no longer a question of fortune or success, it is only a question of saving one's life," but many people were rash enough to think and act otherwise, and frequently paid dearly for their folly. Mme. de Fleury returned to Paris while, or just before, the Terror was raging, and availed herself of the revolutionary law, by which a husband or wife who had emigrated might be divorced. But soon after she had dissolved her marriage and resumed the name of Coigny she was arrested and sent to St. Lazare, one of the most terrible of the prisons of the Revolution, then crowded with people of all ages, ranks, and opinions.

Aimée de Coigny was no saint or heroine, like the Noailles, La Rochejaquelein, and countless others, whose ardent faith and steadfast devotion raised them above the horrors of their surroundings, and carried them triumphantly through danger,

suffering, and death to the life beyond, upon which their hearts were fixed; nor yet a republican enthusiast roughly awakened from dreams of "humanity," "universal brotherhood," and "liberty" under the rule of "The People," whose way of carrying out these principles was so surprising.

Neither had she the anxiety and care for others which made heroes and heroines of so many in those awful times. She had no children, and the only person belonging to her—her father—had emigrated. She was simply a girl of eighteen suddenly snatched from a life of luxury and enjoyment, and shrinking with terror from the horrors around and the fate before her. Amongst her fellow-prisoners was André Chénier, the republican poet, who was soon to suffer death at the hands of those in whom his fantastic dreams had seen the regenerators of mankind. He expressed his love and admiration for her in a poem called "*La jeune Captive*," of which the following are the first lines:—

"Est-ce à moi de mourir ? Tranquille je m'endors,
Et tranquille je veille, et ma veille aux remords,
Ni mon sommeil ne sont en proie.
Ma bienvenue au jour me rit dans tous les yeux ;
Sur des fronts abattus, mon aspect dans ces lieux
Ramène presque de la joie.

Mon beau voyage encore est si loin de sa fin ;
Je pars, et des ormeaux qui bordent le chemin,
J'ai passé les premiers à peine.
Au banquet de la vie à peine commencé
Un instant seulement mes lèvres ont pressé
La coupe en mes mains encore pleine.

Je ne suis qu'au printemps, je veux voir la moisson ;
 Et comme le soleil, de saison en saison,
 Je veux achever mon année.
 Brillante sur ma tige, et honneur du jardin,
 Je n'ai vu luire encor que les feux du matin ;
 Je veux achever ma journée."

* * * * *

Another of her fellow-prisoners, equally fascinated by her and able to render her more practical service, was M. de Montrond, a witty, light-hearted sceptic, a friend of Talleyrand.

It having come to his knowledge that a plot was preparing for another massacre in the prisons on pretence of conspiracy among the prisoners, whose names and lives were at the mercy of the spies within and the police and gaolers without, he contrived by paying a hundred louis to get his own and Mme. de Coigny's liberation, and after the Terror was over they married and went to England for their honeymoon. At the end of two months they were tired of each other, came back to Paris and were divorced, and the Baronne de Montrond again resumed the name of Coigny.

When the Restoration took place and her father returned she devoted herself to him during the rest of his life ; and as her first husband returned too and had an appointment in the household of Louis XVIII., she was always liable to meet him as well as her second husband in society.

In spite of all her social success hers was not a disposition to be happy. She was too excitable, emotional, and unreasonable. A *liaison* with a brother of Garat brought her much unhappiness,

and her unfortunate marriages and love affairs caused the Emperor Napoleon to say to her one day at some court entertainment—

“Aimez vous toujours les hommes ?”

To which she replied—

“Oui, Sire, quand ils sont polis.”

Her last and only constant love affair was with the poet Lemercier, whose devotion never changed until her death in 1820, when she was forty-two years of age.

CHAPTER VIII

Naples—Lady Hamilton—Marie Caroline, Queen of Naples—
Mesdames de France—Their escape—*Les chemises de Marat*—
Rome—Terrible news from France—Venice—Turin—The
Comtesse de Provence—The 10th August—The Refugees—
Milan—Vienna—Delightful society—Prince von Kaunitz—
Life at Vienna.

I N the autumn of 1790 Lisette went to Naples, with which she was enchanted. She took a house on the Chiaja, looking across the bay to Capri and close to the Russian Embassy. The Ambassador, Count Scawronski, called immediately and begged her to breakfast and dine always at his house, where, although not accepting this invitation, she spent nearly all her evenings. She painted his wife, and, after her, Emma Harte, then the mistress of Sir William Hamilton, as a *bacchante*, lying on the sea-shore with her splendid chestnut hair falling loosely about her in masses sufficient to cover her. Sir William Hamilton, who was exceedingly avaricious, paid her a hundred louis for the picture, and afterwards sold it in London for three hundred guineas. Later on, Mme. Le Brun, having painted her as a Sybil for the Duc de Brissac after she became Lady Hamilton, copied the head and gave it to Sir William, who sold that also!

Another time she made a charcoal sketch of two heads on the door of a summer-house by the sea, lent to her by Sir William Hamilton. Years afterwards to her astonishment she saw them in England. He had cut them out of the door and sold them to Lord Warwick !

Mme. Le Brun found Lady Hamilton, as she became shortly afterwards—though extraordinarily beautiful—ignorant, ill-dressed, without *esprit* or conversation, ill-natured, and spiteful in her way of talking about other people, the only topic she seemed capable of discussing. She herself enjoyed Naples, as she did every other pleasant episode in her delightful life. From the *loggia* opening out of her bedroom she looked down into an orange garden ; from her windows she could see constantly some picturesque or beautiful scene. The costumes of the washerwomen who gathered round the fountain, peasant girls dancing the *tarantella*, the fiery torches of the fishermen scattered over the bay at night, all the life and colour and incident of southern life spread like a panorama before her ; and often she would go out in a boat by moonlight or starlight upon the calm sea, looking back upon the town rising like an amphitheatre from the water's edge.

She found as usual plenty of friends, the Princesse Joseph de Monaco and Duchesse de Fleury amongst others, and the Baron de Talleyrand, then French Ambassador. They made excursions to Vesuvius, Pompei, Capri, Ischia, and all the lovely places in the neighbourhood.

One day the Baron de Talleyrand announced that

the Queen wished her to paint the portraits of her two eldest daughters, whose marriages she was just going to Vienna to arrange.¹

Lisette liked the Queen of Naples much better than her elder sister, the Infanta of Parma. Though less beautiful than her younger sister, Marie Antoinette, yet she bore a strong resemblance to her, and had the remains of great beauty.

Mme. Le Brun describes her as affectionate, simple, and royally generous. Hearing that the French Ambassador to Venice, M. de Bombelle, was the only one who refused to sign the Constitution, thereby reducing himself and his family to poverty; she wrote to him that all sovereigns owed a debt of gratitude to faithful subjects, and gave him a pension of twelve thousand francs. Two of his sons became Austrian ministers at Turin and Berne, another was Grand-Master of the household of Marie Louise.

The most infamous calumnies were circulated about Marie Caroline when Napoleon wanted her kingdom for Caroline Murat; but she had a brave, strong character and plenty of brains. The government was carried on by her, for the King could or would do nothing but loiter about at Caserta.

Lisette painted the two Princesses and the Prince Royal before returning to Rome, where she had no sooner arrived than she had to go back to Naples to paint the Queen.

She had had great success in the number of important pictures she painted at Naples; and her

¹ The eldest married the Emperor Francis II., the second the Grand Duke of Tuscany.



E. H. Bearne

ROME

career at Rome was equally prosperous. She had plenty of money now, and nobody to meddle with it, and if it had not been for the constant anxiety about France she would have been perfectly happy. But French news was difficult to get and bad when it was obtained.

Mesdames de France, the two last remaining daughters of Louis XV., arrived in Rome and at once sent for Mme. Le Brun, who was delighted to see them again. They had with great difficulty succeeded in getting away, and had been most anxious to take their niece, Madame Elizabeth, with them. In vain they entreated her to come, she persisted in staying with the King and Queen, and sacrificed her life in so doing.

Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire set off early in 1791. Their whole journey was a perpetual danger. After getting their passports signed with difficulty by the Commune, they were denounced at Sèvres by a maid-servant, stopped by the Jacobins and accused of being concerned in plots and of taking money out of the country, and detained for a fortnight, when they managed to get permission to go on, and left at 10 o'clock on a Saturday night, arriving on Sunday morning at Fontainebleau, where they were again stopped and threatened by the mob, who were just going to be joined by the *gardes nationaux* when a hundred *Chasseurs de Lorraine*, luckily quartered there, charged the mob, opened the gates, and passed the carriages on. At Arnay-le-Duc they were detained for eleven days, and only allowed to proceed when the Comte de Narbonne appeared with a permission extorted by

Mirabeau from the revolutionary government at Paris.

They hurried away just in time, crossed the Mont Cenis, which was covered with snow, and at the foot of which they were met by their nephew, the Comte d'Artois. The King of Sardinia, husband of their niece,[†] the eldest sister of Louis XVI. had sent four hundred soldiers to clear away the snow, and escorted by the Comte d'Artois they arrived safely at Turin where all the *noblesse* were assembled to receive them at the entrance of the royal palace. They arrived at Rome in April.

The disgraceful proceedings and cowardly, préposterous fear of two old ladies, which had made the radical government contemptible and ridiculous, caused the following absurd story to be published in a French newspaper :—

“Les chemises de Marat, ou l'arrestation de Mesdames, tantes du Roi à Arnay-le-Duc.

“Marat avait dit dans un journal que les chemises de Mesdames lui appartenaient. Les patriotes de province crurent de bonne foi que Mesdames avaient emporté les chemises de Marat, et les habitants d'Arnay-ci-devant-le-duc sachant qu'elles devaient passer par là, décidèrent qu'il fallait les arrêter pour leur, faire rendre les chemises qu'elles avaient volées. . . . On les fait descendre de voiture et les officiers municipales avec leurs habits noirs, leur gravité, leurs écharpes, leur civism et leurs perruques, disent à Mesdames :

[†] Madame Clotilde, eldest daughter of the Dauphin, son of Louis XV., married the King of Sardinia.

“(Air : ‘Rendez-moi mon écuelle de bois.’)”

“Donnez-nous les chemises
À Marat,
Donnez-nous les chemises ;
Nous savons à n'en douter pas
Que vous les avez prises.

“Mme. Adelaide, étonnée d'un tel propos répond sur le même air :

“Je n'ai point les chemises
De Marat,
Je n'ai point les chemises ;
Cherchez, Messieurs les magistrats
Cherchez dans nos valises.

“Mme. Victoire dit à son tour :

“Avait-il des chemises,
Marat ?
Avait il des chemises ?
Moi, je crois qu'il n'en avait pas,
Où les aurait-il prises ?

“MM. les magistrats, connaissant de réputation les chemises de l'écrivain, répondent avec une gravité toute municipale :

“Il en avait trois grises
Marat,
Il en avait trois grises,
Avec l'argent de son fatras
Sur le Pont Neuf acquises.

“La municipalité se met alors en devoir de fouiller dans les malles de Mesdames, en disant :

“ Cherchons bien les chemises
 À Marat
 Cherchons bien les chemises
 C'est pour vous un fort vilain cas
 Si vous les avez prises.

“ Enfin, ne pouvant pas distinguer, parmi tant de chemises lesquelles appartenaient à Marat, et les tantes du roi persistant à nier qu'elles eussent, dérobé celles du grand homme, la municipalité d'Arnay-ci-devant-le-duc, accorda à Mesdames la permission de continuer leur voyage après les avoir retenues prisonnières l'espace de dix jours.”

Mme. Le Brun painted the portrait first of Madame Adélaïde, then of Madame Victoire.

The latter, during her last sitting, said to her—

“ I have received some news which fills me with joy ; I hear the King has escaped from France, and I have just written to him, only addressing—To His Majesty the King of France. They will know very well where to find him,” she added smiling.

Mme. Le Brun returned home and told the good news to her daughter's governess. But while they were rejoicing over it they, in the evening, heard one of their servants singing below, a sullen, gloomy fellow who never used to sing, and whom they knew to be a revolutionist. Looking at each other in terror they exclaimed—

“ Some misfortune has happened to the King.”

Next morning they heard of the arrest of the royal family at Varennes.

Most of the servants were bribed by the Jacobins to spy upon their masters, and knew much better than they what was going on in France. Many of

them used to go and meet the *courrier* who told them much more than was contained in the letters he brought. After having lived two years and a half in Italy, chiefly in Rome, Mme. Le Brun began to think of returning to France.

How she could have entertained so mad an idea seems inexplicable ; but in fact, bad as the French news was, she was far from understanding the frightful state of the country. In those days news travelled slowly, important events only became partially known long after they had taken place ; and as to private letters, people dared not put in them anything which might endanger either themselves or their friends.

Her mother, brother, and sister-in-law, to all of whom she was strongly attached, were in France, and she was anxious to see them ; so, with deep regret and many tears, she left Rome and turned her steps northward, of course with her child and governess.

They left Rome late in April, 1792, and travelled slowly along by Perugia, Florence, Siena, Parma, and Mantova to Venice, where they arrived the eve of the Ascension, and saw the splendid ceremony of the marriage of the Doge and the Adriatic. There was a magnificent *fête* in the evening, the battle of the gondoliers and illumination of the *Piazza di San Marco* ; where a fair as well as the illumination went on for a fortnight.

Venice was crowded with foreigners, amongst whom was one of the English princes ; and Lisette's friend, the Princesse Joseph de Monaco, whom she saw for the last time, she also being on her way to France, where she met her death.

She also met an acquaintance, M. Denon, who introduced her to the Comtesse Marini, of whom he was then the *cavalière servente*; and who at once invited her to go that evening to a *café*.

Lisette, to whom such an invitation was unfamiliar, accepted however; and the Countess then said—

“Have you no friend to accompany you?”

“I have no one with me,” replied she, “but my daughter and her governess.”

“Oh, well!” said the Countess, “you must anyhow appear to have somebody; I will lend you M. Denon all the time you are here; he will give you his arm, I will take somebody else’s arm, and people will think I have quarrelled with him, for you can’t go about here without *un ami*.”

The arrangement proved entirely satisfactory. Lisette went about all day with M. Denon, in gondolas, and to see everything—churches, pictures, palaces; every one who knows Venice even now, knows it as a place of enchantment, unlike anything else on earth; and in those days the Doge still reigned, modern desecrations and eyesores were not, and the beauty of the life and surroundings of the Queen of the Adriatic was supreme.

Lisette frequented chiefly the society of the Spanish Ambassadors, with whom she went to the Opera at the far-famed Fenice, and finally left Venice and went by Padova, Vicenza, and Verona to Turin, where she had letters of introduction from Mesdames to the Queen, whose portrait they wished her to paint for them.

In former years, before the marriage of the Queen,



VENICE

E. H. Bearne

To face page 112

Mme. Le Brun had seen her, as a very young girl, at the court of her grandfather, Louis XV., when she was so fat that she was called *le gros Madame*. She was now pale and thin, whether from the austerities of devotion she now practised, or from her grief at the misfortunes of her family and anxiety for her sister, Madame Elizabeth, and her eldest brother, the King of France.

She would not have her portrait done, saying that she was very sorry to refuse her aunts, but as she had renounced the world she could not have her picture taken. She had cut her hair short and her dress was very simple. The King looked nearly as pale and thin.

They received Mme. Le Brun very kindly, and she next went to see the Comtesse de Provence, for the second and third brothers, the Counts of Provence and Artois, had taken refuge at their sister's court.

The Comtesse de Provence was delighted to see Mme. Le Brun again, and arranged various excursions, which they made together into the mountains, in spite of the intense heat, for the summer was at its height. After spending some time in Turin, Signor Porporati offered to lend Mme. Le Brun a farm in the country, where he had a few rooms furnished for himself, and where he used often to go in hot weather. This exactly suited her, for the heat was overpowering, her little girl was made quite ill by it; and with joyful haste, she, with the governess, child, and servants, established themselves amongst the meadows, woods, and streams which surrounded the farm house.

There she rested, spending the days out of doors in the cool green country, and looking forward to her approaching return to France ; when one evening a letter was brought her from M. de Rivière, the brother of her sister-in-law, which told her of the horrible events of the 10th of August, the attack on the Tuileries, the imprisonment of the Royal Family, the massacres and horrors of all kinds still going on.

Overcome with grief at this terrible news, and filled with self-reproach for the peaceful happiness of her own life, the solitude of the place became insupportable, and she at once returned to Turin.

Had not this been sufficient to put a stop to all idea of going to France, the sights which met them as the little party entered Turin would have done so.

The streets and squares were thronged with French refugees, who had fled, and were still flying, from France. They arrived by thousands, men, women, and children of all ranks and ages, most of them without luggage, money, or even food ; having had no time to take anything with them or think of anything but saving their lives. The old Duchesse de Villeroi had been supported on the journey by her maid, who had enough money to get food for ten sous a day. Women, who had never been in carts before, were prematurely confined on the road, owing to the jolting ; children were crying for food, it was a heartrending spectacle. The King gave orders that food and lodging should be found for them, but there was not room to put them all in ; the Comtesse de Provence was having

food carried about the streets, and Lisette, like the rest, gave all the help in her power, going round with the equerry of Madame to look for rooms and get provisions.

Seeing a handsome, noble-looking old officer, wearing the Cross of St. Louis, leaning against the corner of a street, with despair in his face, asking for nothing, but evidently faint with hunger, they went up and gave him what little money they had left, which he took, thanking them with a voice broken by sobs. The next morning he and several others were lodged in the King's palace, no other rooms being forthcoming.

The weeks following were terrible for Lisette, the anxiety and agitation she was in being increased by the non-appearance of M. de Rivière, who had told her to expect him at Turin. At last, a fortnight later than the day fixed, he arrived, so dreadfully changed that she hardly recognised him. As he crossed the bridge of Beauvoisin he had seen the priests being massacred, and that and all the other atrocities he had witnessed had thrown him into a fever, which had detained him for some time at Chambéry.

With fear and trembling Lisette inquired for her relations, but was assured that her mother was well, and never left Neuilly, that M. Le Brun was all right at Paris, and that her brother and his wife and child were safe in hiding.

Having decided to stop at Turin and wait for further news, she took a little house in a vineyard near the town. M. de Rivière lodged with her, and gradually recovered amongst the peaceful surround-

ings. Even the sight of the honest, quiet, peaceable peasants did them good. They walked among the vineyards, or in a neighbouring wood, where steep paths led to little churches and chapels, in which they attended mass on Sundays ; and Lisette resumed her work, painting amongst other things a picture, "*Une baigneuse*," which she sold at once to a Russian prince, and a portrait of his daughter as a present to Signor Porporati.

After a time she went to Milan, where she was received with great honour. The first evening she was serenaded by all the young men of the chief Milanese families, but, not knowing that all this music was on her account, she sat listening and enjoying it with composure, until her landlady came and explained. She made an excursion to the lakes, and on her return to Milan decided to go to Vienna, seeing that France would be out of the question for an indefinite time.

At a concert in Milan she made the acquaintance of the Countess Bistri, a beautiful Pole, who was also going to Vienna with her husband. They arranged to travel together, and this was the beginning of a long and intimate friendship.

The Count and Countess were kind, excellent people, who had just brought with them a poor old emigrant priest, and another younger one, whom they had picked up on the road after he had escaped from the massacre of the bridge of Beauvoisin. They had only a carriage with two places, but they had put the old man between them and the young one behind the carriage, and had taken the greatest care of them.

They travelled from Milan to Vienna through the magnificent scenery of Tyrol and Styria, and arrived safely at the Austrian capital, where Mme. Le Brun spent two years and a half happily and prosperously. Every one was eager to invite her to their houses, and the numerous portraits she painted made her sojourn in Austria as profitable as it was pleasant.

She brought, of course, many letters of introduction, of which the first she availed herself was to the Countess von Thoum, at whose *soirées* she met all the most important personages in Vienna, and also many French *émigrés*, amongst whom, to her great joy, was her old friend the Comte de Vaudreuil.

Never, she afterwards remarked, had she seen so many pretty women together as in the *salon* of Mme. de Thoum ; but what surprised her was that most of them did needlework sitting round a large table all the evening. They would also knit in their boxes at the opera ; but it was explained that this was for charity. In other respects she found society at Vienna very much the same as at Paris before the advent of the Revolution.

Another of her introductions was to Prince von Kaunitz, the great Minister of Maria Theresa, whose power and influence had been such that he was called *le cocher de l'Europe* ;¹ and whose disinterested single-minded patriotism was shown in his answer, when, having proposed a certain field-marshal as president of the council of war, the Empress remarked—

“ But that man is your declared enemy.”

¹ The coachman of Europe.

“Madame,” he replied, “that man is the friend of the State, which is the only thing that ought to be considered.”

Kaunitz was now eighty-three years old, tall, thin, and upright. His great intellect, taste, and judgment seemed unimpaired, and he prided himself on his perfect seat on horseback. In costume and appearance he resembled the splendid cavaliers of the court of Louis XIV.

His life at Vienna was that of a *grand seigneur* of the most illustrious order, and on New Year’s day and on his *fête*, the crowd that flocked to his house to congratulate him was so enormous that he might have been supposed to be the Emperor himself.

He was extremely kind to Mme. Le Brun, whom he always called “*ma bonne amie*”; she was often at his house, though she did not care for the great dinners of never less than thirty people, which were always at seven o’clock—in those days considered a late hour.

Lisette, in fact, liked to paint all the morning, dine by herself at half-past two, then take a *siesta*, and devote the latter part of the day and evening to social engagements.

Prince von Kaunitz desired that her picture of the Sibyl should be exhibited for a fortnight in his *salon*, where all the court and town came to see it. Mme. Le Brun made also the acquaintance of the celebrated painter of battles, Casanova.

One evening at a dinner-party of Prince von Kaunitz, when the conversation turned upon painting, some one was speaking of Rubens being appointed ambassador.

An old German baroness exclaimed—

“What? A painter ambassador? Doubtless it must have been an ambassador who amused himself by painting.”

“No, Madame,” replied Casanova, “he was a painter who amused himself by being ambassador.”

One of her new friends was the Countess Kinska, who, as she observed, was “neither maid, wife, nor widow,” for she and her husband had been married according to their parents’ arrangement, without ever having seen each other, and after the ceremony Count Kinska, turning to her, said—

“Madame, we have obeyed our parents. I leave you with regret, but I cannot conceal from you that for a long time I have been devoted to another woman. I cannot live without her, and I am going back to her.”

So saying, he got into the carriage that was waiting at the church door, and she saw no more of him.

The Countess was extremely pretty, attractive, and amiable. One day while she was sitting for her portrait, Mme. Le Brun had occasion to send for Mme. Charot, her nursery-governess, who came in looking so pleased that she asked what had happened.

“I have just had a letter from my husband,” she said; “he tells me that they have put me on the list of *émigrés*. I shall lose my eight hundred francs *de rente*, but I console myself for that, as there I am on the list of respectable people.”

A few minutes later the Countess said that Mme. Le Brun’s painting blouse was so convenient she wished she had one like it; and in reply to her offer

to lend her one said she would much rather Mme. Charot made it, for which she would send the linen. When it was finished she gave Mme. Charot ten louis.

M. de Rivière was also at Vienna, and took part in all the private theatricals and diversions going on.

Mme. Le Brun painted a remarkable portrait of Mlle. Fries, the great banker's daughter, as Sappho, she being an excellent musician. Also of the Baron and Baroness Strogonoff with whom she became very intimate.

At a State ball she first saw again the Empress, Marie Thérèse, daughter of the Queen of Naples, whom she found much changed in appearance. She had painted her portrait in 1792.

She also was overjoyed to meet the Comtesse de Brionne, Princesse de Lorraine, one of the earliest friends who had shown her unvarying kindness at the beginning of her career—and she resumed her old habit of going often to supper with her. The Polignac, too, had a place near Vienna, in fact, wherever she went Lisette met numbers of her unfortunate countrymen and acquaintance driven into exile, watching in despair the course of events in France.

She scarcely dared read the newspapers, since one day on opening one she had seen in the death list the names of nine persons of her acquaintance; and all her Austrian friends tried to prevent her from hearing or knowing what was going on. A letter from her brother, however, brought her the fatal news of the murder of the King and Queen.

She was as happy at Vienna as she could be

anywhere under the circumstances. During the winter she had the most brilliant society in Europe, and for the summer she had taken a little house at Schonbrunn, near the Polignac, in a lovely situation, to which she always retired when Vienna became too hot, and where she took long solitary walks by the Danube, or sat and sketched under the trees.

Here she finished the portrait of the young Princess von Lichtenstein, as Iris. As she was represented with bare feet, her husband told Mme. Le Brun that when it was hung in his gallery, and the heads of the family came to see it, they were all extremely scandalised, so he had placed a pair of little shoes on the ground under it, and told the grand-parents they had dropped off.

CHAPTER IX

Dresden—St. Petersburg—The Empress Catherine II.—Orloff—Potemkin—Russian hospitality—Magnificence of society at St. Petersburg—Mme. Le Brun is robbed—Slanders against her—The Russian Imperial family—Popularity and success of Mme. Le Brun—Death of the Empress Catherine.

TWO years and a half had passed and Mme. Le Brun had no desire to leave Vienna, when the Russian Ambassador and several of his compatriots urged her strongly to go to St. Petersburg, where they said the Empress Catherine II. would be extremely pleased to have her.

She had a great wish to see this Empress, whose strange and commanding personality impressed her, besides which she was convinced that in Russia she would soon gain enough to complete the fortune she had resolved to make before returning to France.

On Sunday, April 19, 1795, therefore, she left Vienna and went by Prague to Dresden, where she was of course enraptured with the world-famed gallery, and above all with the *chef d'œuvre* of Raffaele, the Madonna di San Sisto—that vision of beauty before which every other seems dim and pale. She spent five days at Berlin, stayed a few

days more at the castle of her old friend Prince Henry of Prussia, and arrived at St. Petersburg late in July, very tired and exhausted with the journey in an uncomfortable carriage over roads so bad that she was jolted and flung about from one great stone to another from Riga to St. Petersburg, until her only longing was to be quiet and rest.

But she had not been more than twenty-four hours in the Russian capital when the French Ambassador was announced; his visit was succeeded by others, and that evening the Empress sent to say that she would receive Mme. Le Brun at Czarskoiesolo[†] the next day at one o'clock.

The French Ambassador, Count d'Esterhazy, said that he would come at ten and take her to *déjeuner* with his wife, who was just then living at Czarskoiesolo. For the first time during her wandering life from court to court, Lisette felt intimidated, and trembled. This was so different from any of her former experiences. At every other court she had been *en pays de connaissance*. Austrian society was very like Parisian, Rome was the centre of Christendom, the sovereigns of the lesser Italian states were the near relations of her own King and Queen, their religion was the same.

But here, in this half-barbarous country, at an immense distance from everywhere she had ever been before, with a different church, a language incomprehensible to her and a sovereign mysterious, powerful, autocratic, whose reputation was sinister, and to whose private character were attached the darkest suspicions, an additional uneasiness was

[†] So spelt in the "Memoires de Mme. Le Brun."

added to her reflections owing entirely to her habitual careless absence of mind in not having provided himself with a proper *toilette* for the occasion.

Accustomed all her life to be surrounded by friends, to be made much of and allowed to do as she liked wherever she went, she had followed her own fashion of wearing a certain style of dress, artistic, characteristic, but inexpensive. Nobody had objected to the simple *toilettes* of soft muslin, gracefully arranged, nor to the scarves and handkerchiefs she twisted in her hair. But she became suddenly conscious that they were by no means suitable to appear before the formidable personage, whom she pictured to herself as tall, dark, gloomy, and terrible, moreover the Countess Esterhazy looked at her in astonishment, and with much hesitation said—

“Madame, have you not brought any other dress?”

With much confusion she replied that she had not had time to have a proper dress made, but she was aware of the impossibility of explaining why, coming straight from Vienna, she had not brought one with her; and the dissatisfied looks of the Ambassadors increased her alarm when it was time to go to the Empress.

The Ambassador gave her his arm, told her to be sure to kiss the hand of the Empress, and they walked across the park to the palace, where, through a window on the ground floor, they saw a girl of about seventeen watering a pot of pinks. Slight and delicate, with an oval face, regular features,



CATHERINE II., EMPRESS OF RUSSIA

pale complexion, and fair hair curling round her forehead and neck, she wore a loose white tunic tied with a sash round her waist, and against the background of marble columns and hangings of pink and silver, looked like a fairy.

It was the Grand-Duchess Elizabeth, wife of Alexander, eldest grandson of Catherine II., and as Mme. Le Brun muttered, "It is Psyche!" she came to meet her, and with the most charming courtesy said that she had so longed to see her that she had even dreamed of her, and detained her talking for some time. A few moments afterwards Lisette found herself alone with the Empress Catherine.

The Semiramis of the North, as she was called, received her so graciously, that all her fears and embarrassments disappeared.

She took no notice of her *toilette*, expressed her deep satisfaction at her arrival in Russia, hoped she would be happy and stay there a long time, and ordered an apartment in the palace to be prepared for her during the rest of the summer.

This, however, was not done, owing to some palace intrigue, and greatly to the relief of Mme. Le Brun, who much preferred to live by herself in her own way.

The Empress was not in the least like what she had imagined. Short and stout, though exceedingly dignified, her white hair was raised high above her forehead, her face, still handsome, expressed the power and genius which characterised her commanding personality, her eyes and her voice were gentle, and her hands extremely beautiful. She had taken off one of her gloves, expecting the usual

salute, but Lisette had forgotten all about it till afterwards when the Ambassador asked, to her dismay, if she had remembered to kiss the hand of the Empress.

Whatever might be her private character, Catherine II. was a great sovereign, a wise ruler, and beloved by the Russian people. In her reign Tartary, Lithuania, the Caucasus, Courland, and part of Poland were added to the vast Muscovite Empire ; the Russian share of Poland alone added six millions to her subjects. Every branch of the service, every corner of the empire, canals, mines, agriculture, commerce, received her consideration and supervision ; art and literature were encouraged and advanced ; the progress made by Russia under her rule was enormous.

Catherine was the daughter of Prince Christian of Anhalt-Zerbst, and was sixteen years old when she was brought from the old castle among the lakes and forests of Germany to be married to Peter, son of Charles Frederic, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Anne, eldest daughter of Peter the Great ;¹ who had been adopted as heir by the Empress Elizabeth, his aunt, youngest daughter of Peter the Great, with whose grandson, Peter II.,² the male line had ended.

Peter of Holstein-Gottorp was seventeen ; and

¹ It has been, however, confidently asserted that Peter was not and could not have been the son of the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, but of a Swedish Colonel named Bruhmer, with whom by the advice of her mother (Catherine I.), the Duchess carried on an intrigue.—“*Cathérine II.*” (Castera).

² Son of Alexis the Tsarevitch, who was put to death by his father, Peter the Great.

was no attractive husband for a young girl with an impetuous nature, strong passions, and an enthusiastic love of pleasure and magnificence. He was sullen, tyrannical, violent-tempered, brutal, often intoxicated, and besides terribly disfigured by the small-pox.

He carried on an open *liaison* with the Countess Woronsoff, while Catherine, who regarded him with dislike and repugnance, consoled herself with Prince Soltikoff, the hero of Russia from his victory over Frederic the Great, King of Prussia, and then with Prince Stanislas Poniatowski.

The Empress Elizabeth, whose own life was a constant succession of love intrigues, disapproved nevertheless of this open and public scandal, particularly when her nephew was reported to be about to divorce his wife in order to marry his mistress.

She sent the Countess Woronsoff to her father's estates in the country, dismissed Poniatowski from St. Petersburg, and tried to reconcile the ill-matched couple ; but in vain. She died soon afterwards, and Peter III., a German at heart, proceeded on his accession to make himself hated in Russia by his infatuation for everything Prussian ; Prussia being the nation of all others disliked by his subjects. He discarded the French and Austrian alliance, attached himself to Frederic, King of Prussia, and besides all the unpopular changes he made in his own army, accepted the rank of an officer in that of Prussia, wore the Prussian uniform, and declared that he preferred the title of a Prussian Major-General to any other he possessed !

He quarrelled with the clergy and the nobles, and tried to re-model everything after the German fashion. Even such changes as were beneficial he carried out in a manner so intolerable that very soon a powerful party was formed against him, of which Catherine was the head.

For she was as much loved as he was detested. German though she was she identified herself with the nation whose crown she wore, she carried on the traditions of Peter the Great and Elizabeth; made friends of the church, the army, and the nobles, and yet had prudence enough to avoid by any open defiance hastening the vengeance of Peter, who, in spite of the warnings of the King of Prussia, despised his enemies, disbelieved in his unpopularity, and occupied himself with projects for adopting as his heir the unfortunate Ivan VI., whom Elizabeth had dethroned and imprisoned, disowning his son, divorcing his wife, and marrying the Countess Woronoff. Whilst he loitered away his time with the latter at Oranienbaum, the conspiracy broke forth; headed by the brothers Orloff, five men of gigantic stature, powerful and capable in mind and body. They were all in the Guards, and succeeded in bringing over that and six other regiments. Catherine and one of her ladies left the palace in a cart disguised as peasants, then, changing into officers' uniforms, arrived at the barracks, where Catherine was hailed with enthusiasm by soldiers, clergy, and people as Catherine II., Empress of all the Russias.¹

¹ Catherine II. was adored by the army and knew how to appreciate the prowess of her soldiers. After a great victory of

The troops marched to Oranienbaum, the Emperor fled and proposed to abdicate and retire to Holstein with the Countess Woronsoff, but he was persuaded to go to Peterhoff in order to make arrangements, was seized by the conspirators, thrown into prison, where six days afterwards he was murdered by the Orloff, who held the supreme power in their hands.¹ Whether or not Catherine was consenting to this is not certain, though very probable. She hated Peter, by whom she had been oppressed, threatened, and ill-treated, and who had purposed to divorce her and disinherit her son.

Gregory Orloff became her all-powerful favourite, and although she would never agree to his preposterous ambition and allow him to be married to her and crowned Emperor, she loaded the Orloff family with riches and honours, which they retained after other favourites had succeeded the gigantic guardsman in her affections.

Of all of them the greatest was Potemkin, a Polish officer, to whom it was rumoured that she was secretly married, and whom she made Generalissimo of the Armies of Russia, Grand Admiral of the Fleet, and supreme Hetman of the Cossacks.

Potemkin cannot be judged as a commonplace favourite, exalted or destroyed by a caprice; he represented the ambition of Russia in the eighteenth century; after his death Catherine could never replace that splendid and supple intelligence.²

General Souvavoff she sent him a *courrier* with simply an empty envelope on which was written "*Au Maréchal Souvaroff.*"

¹ "Catherine II." (J. Castera).

² "La Grande Catherine" (Capefigue).

He had been dead about four years when Mme. Le Brun arrived in Russia, but was still talked of as a sort of magician. His niece, the Countess Scawronska, said to her—

“If my uncle had known you, he would have overwhelmed you with honours and riches.”

Amongst Lisette's new Russian friends was the beautiful Princesse Dolgorouki, with whom Count Cobentzel was hopelessly in love; but as Lisette observed, her indifference was not to be wondered at, for Cobentzel was fifty and very ugly; and Potemkin had been in love with her. Besides all his other gifts he was extremely handsome and charming, and his generosity and magnificence were unparalleled.

When on the *fête* Sainte Catherine he gave a great banquet supposed to be in honour of the Empress, crystal cups full of diamonds were brought in at dessert, the diamonds being served in spoonsful to the ladies.

The Princess remarking on this extravagance, he said in a low voice—

*“Puisque c'est vous que je fête, comment vous étonnez-vous de quelque chose ?”*¹

For her name also was Catherine.

Another time, hearing that the Princess wanted some shoes for a ball, he sent an express which travelled night and day to Paris to get them.

And it was well-known that he had ordered the assault upon the fortress of Otshakoff to be prematurely made because she wished to see it.

The lavish, almost barbaric hospitality of the

¹ Since it is in your honour, why should anything surprise you ?

great Russian nobles both at St. Petersburg and Moscow astonished Mme. Le Brun. Many of them possessed colossal fortunes and kept open house. Prince Narischkin, Grand Equerry, had always a table to sit five-and-twenty or thirty guests.

Mme. Le Brun found society at the Russian capital extremely amusing, and was, if possible, received with even more enthusiasm than in the other countries in which she had sojourned. She went to balls, dinners, suppers, or theatricals every night, and when she could manage to spare the time from the numerous portraits she painted, she went to stay in the country houses and palaces near, where in addition to other festivities they had *fêtes* on the Neva by night, in gorgeously fitted up boats with crimson and gold curtains, accompanied by musicians.

Financially, in spite of the large sums she gained, Lisette was at first unfortunate. She placed 45,000 francs in a bank which broke immediately afterwards.

Returning at one o'clock one morning from some theatricals at the Princess Menzikoff, she was met by Mme. Charot in consternation announcing that she had been robbed by her German servant of 35,000 francs, that the lad had tried to throw suspicion upon a Russian, but the money having been found upon him he had been arrested by the police, who had taken all the money as a proof, having first counted the gold pieces.

Mme. Le Brun blamed her for having let the gold go, and just as she said, she never got its value again, for although the same number of pieces were

returned, instead of the Austrian gold coins they only gave her ducats, worth so much less that she lost 15,000 francs by them. Then she heard that the boy was sentenced to be hanged, and as he was the son of a *concièrge* and his wife belonging to the Prince de Ligne, excellent people who had served her in Vienna with attention and civility, she was in despair, hurried to the governor to obtain his pardon, and with much difficulty succeeded in getting him sent away by sea ; for the Empress had heard of it, and was very angry.

To her joy she met her old friend Doyen, the painter. He had emigrated two years after her, and arrived at St. Petersburg with no money. The Empress came to his assistance and offered him the directorship of the Academy of Arts. He settled in the Russian capital, where he got plenty of employment, painting both pictures and ceilings for the Empress, who liked him, and for the Russian nobles. The Empress gave him a place near her own box at the theatre, and used often to talk to him.

While she was still in Vienna, Lisette had been told by the Baronne de Strogonoff of the Greek supper at Paris, which she said she knew cost 80,000 francs.

“ You astonish me ! ” said the Baronne, when the affair was explained to her ; “ for at St. Petersburg we were told about it by one of your countrymen, M. L——, who said he knew you very well, and was present at the supper.”

To which Lisette replied that she did not know M. L—— at all except by name ; and the matter ended.

A few days after her arrival at St. Petersburg, where M. L—— did not suppose she would ever come, Mme. Le Brun went to see Mme. de Strogonoff, and as she was not well, went into her bedroom and sat down by the bed.

Presently M. L—— was announced, and Mme. Le Brun having hidden herself behind the curtains, Mme. de Strogonoff ordered him to be shown in, and said to him—

“Well, you must be very glad, for Mme. Le Brun has just arrived.”

M. L—— began to hesitate and stammer, while his hostess continued to question him; and Mme. Le Brun, coming out from behind the curtain, said—

“Then you know Mme. Le Brun very well, Monsieur?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Well, that is very strange,” she observed; “because I am Mme. Le Brun, whom you have calumniated, and I now see you for the first time in my life.”

At this he rose, his legs seeming to tremble under him, and taking his hat he left the room and was seen no more, for in consequence of this he was excluded from all the best houses.

When the Empress returned from Czarskoiesolo she desired Mme. Le Brun to paint the portraits of the Grand Duchesses Alexandrine and Helena, daughters of the Tsarevitch, then fourteen and thirteen years old, and afterwards that of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, wife of Alexander, eldest grandson of the Empress, the young girl she had

seen on her first visit to Czarskoiesolo, by whom she was completely fascinated.

The Imperial family, with whom she soon became well acquainted, consisted of the Tsarevitch, afterwards Paul I., his wife, Marie of Wurtemberg, a tall, fair, noble-looking woman, whom every one liked and respected, their sons, the wives of the two elder ones, and their daughters.

They were all entirely under the domination of the Empress, against whose will nobody dared to rebel, though Paul as a child used to ask his tutor why his father had been killed and why his mother wore the crown which ought to have been his.

He was the only one of the Imperial family Lisette was at all afraid of, for the Empress was unceasingly good to her, and the princes and princesses were all very young.

Alexander, afterwards Alexander I., resembled his mother in beauty and charm of character ; but Constantine was like his father, whose eccentric, gloomy disposition seemed to foreshadow the fate which lay before him. His strange, unbalanced nature alternated between good and evil ; capricious and violent, he was yet capable of kindness and generosity.

Constantine, although very young, was married to the Princess Anne of Coburg, of whom Mme. Le Brun remarked that without being so lovely as the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, she was still very pretty, very lively, and only sixteen years old. She was not happy with Constantine, from whom she separated after a time and went back to her own family.

Neither of the young wives were altogether fortunate, for some years later two beautiful Polish girls, whose father had been killed in the Polish war, were brought by their mother to the Russian court. The eldest and prettiest was only sixteen, and was married to Prince Narischkin, but the overpowering passion which she inspired in the Emperor Alexander is well known; whilst her sister captivated the terrible Constantine.

Mme. Le Brun saw Mme. de Narischkin and her sister before she left Russia, for though she only intended to be there for a short time, she remained for six years, making an immense number of friends, and apparently no enemy but Zuboff, the last favourite of the Empress Catherine, an arrogant, conceited young man of two-and-twenty, whom she supposed she had offended by not paying court to him; and therefore he tried all he could to injure her with the Empress.

She lived opposite the palace, and could see the Empress open a window and throw food to flocks of crows that always came for it; and in the evenings when the *salons* were lighted up she could watch her playing hide-and-seek and other games with her grandchildren and some of the court.

For she adored her grandchildren, whom she kept entirely under her own control, allowing their parents to have no voice in their education, which she certainly directed with great care and wisdom.

Every one crowded to the studio of Mme. Le Brun on Sundays to see the portraits of the Grand Duchesses. Zuboff, seeing the crowd of

carriages which, after leaving the palace, stopped before her house, remarked to the Empress—

“See Madame, people go also to pay their court to Mme. Le Brun. They must certainly be *rendez-vous* which they have at her house.”

But his insinuations made no impression upon the Empress. She liked Mme. Le Brun and paid no attention to him.

The climate of Russia Lisette became gradually accustomed to. The absence of spring and autumn, the short, hot summer, not beginning until June and ending in August, were at first very strange to her. The first May she spent there the half-melted snow was on the ground and the windows still closed up, while enormous blocks of ice came crashing down the Neva with a noise like thunder.

The splendid ceremony of the benediction of the Neva by the Archimandrite, in the presence of the Empress, the Imperial family, and all the great dignitaries, deeply impressed her.

One day at the end of May when she and her daughter were walking in the summer gardens, they noticed that all the shrubs were covered only with buds. Taking a long walk round the gardens and returning to the same place, they found all the buds had burst into leaf.

The cold of the long winters she found, as every one says, much more supportable than in other countries whilst indoors, the heating of the houses being so perfect. And sledging parties were added to the other amusements of her life.

The hot weather she used to spend at some house

she took or had lent to her in the country near St. Petersburg.

One Sunday in October, 1796, Lisette went, after mass, to the palace to present the portrait she had just finished of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth.

After expressing her satisfaction, the Empress said—

“They are absolutely resolved that you shall do my portrait. I am very old, but still, as they all wish it, I will give you the first sitting this day week.”

The following Thursday morning the Empress did not ring as usual at nine o'clock. They waited till after ten, and then the first *femme de chambre* went in and found her lying on the floor struck by apoplexy.

Lisette was at home with her daughter, who was just recovering from an illness, when the news was brought to her.

Filled with alarm and sorrow, she hurried to the Princess Dolgorouki, where Count Cobentzel brought them constant news from the palace, where desperate but fruitless efforts were being made to revive the Empress.

Everywhere was nothing but consternation, grief, and alarm; for all ranks and classes not only adored Catherine, but were terrified at the advent of Paul.

In the evening Catherine II. died and Paul arrived. Lisette hardly dared leave the Princess Dolgorouki's, to go home, as every one was saying there would be a revolution against Paul. The streets were filled with people, but there was no

disorder. The crowds reassembled next day before the palace of Catherine, calling her their mother, with cries and tears.

For six weeks she lay in state in a great room in the palace, which was illuminated day and night. The Emperor had his father, Peter III., brought from the convent where he was buried to be taken at the same time as Catherine to the fortress where all the Russian monarchs are interred. He obliged the assassins of his father to carry the corners of the funeral pall, and himself, bareheaded, with the Empress and all the ladies of the court, with long trains and veils, walked through the snow and fearful cold in the procession from the palace to the fortress.





PAUL, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

CHAPTER X

Paul I.—Terror he inspired—Death of the mother of Mme. Le Brun—Marriage of her daughter—Moscow—The Tsarevitch Alexander—Assassination of Paul I.—“I salute my Emperor”—Mme. Le Brun returns to Paris—Changes—London—Life in England—Paris—Separated from M. Le Brun—Society during the Empire—Caroline Murat—Switzerland—Fall of the Empire—Restoration—Death of M. Le Brun—Of her daughter—Travels in France—Her nieces—Conclusion.

FROM Catherine II. to Paul I. was indeed a fearful change. The sudden accession to supreme power after a life of repression increased the malady which was gaining ground upon him. It was evident that his brain was affected, and the capricious violence and cruelty which he was now free to exercise as he pleased left nobody in peace or safety.

Nobody could feel sure when they got up in the morning that they would go safely to bed at night; the slightest offence given to the Emperor meant imprisonment or Siberia, and his orders were so preposterous that it was difficult not to offend him.

He commanded every one to salute his palace, even when he was not there. He forbade round hats, and sent police about with long sticks to knock off any they met.

There were spies everywhere ; people never dared mention him, and began to be afraid to receive their friends at all, or if they did, carefully closed the shutters ; if a ball took place, the carriages were sent away for fear of attracting attention.

The order was given for every one to wear powder, but as Mme. Le Brun did not like it in portraits, and was painting that of Prince Bariatinski, she begged him to come without it. One day he arrived in her studio pale and trembling.

“What is the matter ?” she exclaimed.

“Ah !” cried he. “I have just met the Emperor as I came to you. I had only time to rush under a portico and am dreadfully afraid he recognised me.”

One night, at a masked ball, a young man accidentally in a crowd pushed against a woman, who cried out.

Paul turned to one of his *aides-de-camp*, saying—

“Take that gentleman to the fortress and come back and tell me when he is safely shut up there.”

The *aide-de-camp* returned, saying that he had executed the order, but adding—

“Your Majesty must know that that young man is extremely shortsighted ; here is the proof.” And he held out his spectacles, which he had brought.

The Emperor tried them on and exclaimed hastily—

“Run quick and fetch him and take him to his parents. I shall not go to bed till you tell me he is safe at home.”

Lisette was dreadfully afraid of him, for although

he liked her, and was always extremely polite and pleasant to her, she never felt that she could trust him.

He gave orders that every one, women as well as men, should get out of their sledges or carriages when he passed. It was dreadfully cold, with deep snow, and he was always driving about, often almost without escort, so that he was not at once recognised; but it was dangerous to disobey.

One day Lisette was driving, and seeing him coming when her coachman did not, she called out—

“Stop! Stop! It is the Emperor!” But as she was getting out, he descended from his sledge and hastened to prevent her, saying with a most gracious air that his orders did not apply to foreigners, above all, not to Mme. Le Brun.

He continued the kindness of Catherine II. to Doyen, who was now very old, and lived prosperous and happy, and, as Mme. Le Brun said, if her father's old friend was satisfied with his lot at St. Petersburg, she was not less so.

She now painted the whole day except when on Sundays she received in her studio the numbers of people, from the Imperial family downwards, who came to see her portraits; to which she had added a new and great attraction, for she had caused to be sent from Paris her great picture of Marie Antoinette in a blue velvet dress, which excited the deepest interest. The Prince de Condé, when he came to see it, could not speak, but looked at it and burst into tears.

Society was so full of French refugees that

Lisette remarked she could almost fancy herself in Paris.

The Emperor desired her to paint the portrait of the Empress, whom she represented standing in full court dress, with a crown of diamonds. Lisette used to declare that she was like a woman out of the Gospel, and that she was the only woman she knew whom no calumny ever attacked. One day she brought her two youngest sons to the sitting, the Grand Dukes Nicolas and Michael, then children. Of the Grand Duke Nicolas, afterwards Emperor, Mme. Le Brun declared that she had never seen a more beautiful child, and that she could paint from memory his face, which had all the characteristic beauty of Greece.

But amidst all this professional and social prosperity Mme. Le Brun was now to experience two severe domestic sorrows, one of which was the loss of her mother, of whose death her brother sent her the news from France. The other, related to her daughter, was entirely owing to her own infatuated folly, and was not at all surprising.

For Mme. Le Brun had so brought up the girl that it would have been a miracle if she had not turned out, as she did, utterly selfish, vain, and heartless.

Jeanne Le Brun was, according to her mother, pretty, clever, extremely well-educated, charming in manner, and universally admired. Allowing for her infatuation, it was probable that her daughter was attractive. She was now seventeen, and went into society with her mother, whose foolish admiration and flattery encouraged all her faults.

Mme. Le Brun allowed her to have her own way

in all things ; made herself a slave to her caprices, as she had always done ; and when her friends remonstrated with her upon her folly, paid no attention to them, or replied that everybody loved or admired her child. Being engaged all day and unable to go out much with Jeanne, she allowed her to go on sledging parties with the Countess Czernicheff, and often to spend the evenings at her house, where she met and fell in love with the Count's secretary, M. Nigris, a good-looking man of thirty with neither fortune, talent, character, connections, or any recommendation whatever.

In vain Mme. Le Brun tried to dissuade her from this deplorable marriage, the spoilt young girl, accustomed to have everything she chose, would not give way ; the Czernicheff and other objectionable friends she had made supported her against her mother, the worst of all being her governess, Mme. Charot, who had betrayed the confidence of Mme. Le Brun by giving her daughter books to read of which she disapproved, filling her head with folly, and assisting her secretly in this fatal love-affair.

After being tormented and persecuted for some time, Mme. Le Brun yielded, gave her consent, obtained that of M. Le Brun, and provided a handsome *dot*, trousseau, and jewels for the intolerable girl, who did not show the slightest gratitude or affection to her mother, but behaved throughout in the most insolent, heartless manner.

A fortnight after the marriage she no longer cared about her husband, and soon afterwards she caught the small-pox.

Mme. Le Brun nursed her through it with a devotion she did not deserve, and then ill, exhausted, and out of spirits, set off for Moscow, where she arrived after a long journey full of hardships, bad roads, and thick fogs. The sight of Moscow, the ancient splendid capital, before it was devastated by the fire and sword of the invader, with its huge palaces and thousands of domes surmounted with gold crosses, filled her with admiration and delight.

She was received with the hospitality and distinction she always experienced, met many old acquaintances, and passed several months very pleasantly.

Society was much larger here than at St. Petersburg, where it seemed almost to form one family, every one being related to each other.

It was with difficulty that she tore herself away when, in March, 1801, she wished to return to St. Petersburg, and it was upon her journey thither that she heard of the assassination of Paul I.

She had stopped to change horses and found that she could get none, as they were being sent all over the country to convey the news. She was consequently obliged to remain all night in her carriage, which was drawn up by the roadside close to a river, from which blew a bitterly cold wind.

When at length she arrived in St. Petersburg she found the city in a frenzy of delight. They danced in the streets, embracing each other, and exclaiming—

“What a deliverance!”

Indeed, many houses had been illuminated, such

was the terror he had inspired and the cruelty of his actions.

For some time the character of Paul had become more and more gloomy and menacing ; his mind was filled with the darkest suspicions, even to the extent of believing that the Empress and his children were conspiring against his life ; which was all the more terrible for the Empress Marie, as they had for many years, as long as the Empress Catherine lived, been very happy together, and in spite of everything she still remained deeply attached to him.

This was all the more inexplicable as he not only suspected and accused her of conspiracy, but made no pretence of being faithful to her, and had taken away Mme. Chevalier, the mistress of his devoted *valet de chambre*, Koutaivoff. The doors between his own apartments and those of the Empress he had caused to be double-locked, thereby preventing his own escape when the conspirators forced their way into his room, headed by Zuboff, whom he had first exiled, then loaded with favours.

They had systematically augmented his suspicions till they induced him to sign an order for the arrest of the Empress, the Tsarevitch, and the Grand Duke Constantine, and this document they showed the Tsarevitch, saying : " You see that your father is mad, and you will all be lost unless we prevent it by shutting him up instead."

Alexander, seeing the fearful danger hanging over his mother, his brother, and himself, was silent ; and Pahlen, who was the director of the plot, took care that it should go much further than restraint.

When Alexander heard of the assassination of his father his grief and horror left no doubt of his ignorance of what had been intended and carried out; and when, on presenting himself to his mother she cried out, "Go away! Go away! I see you stained with your father's blood!" he replied with tears—

"I call God to witness, mother, that I did not order this dreadful crime!"

When the affair was fully explained to her she threw herself at his feet, exclaiming—

"Then I salute my Emperor."

The strong affection between Alexander I. and his mother lasted as long as she lived.

The young Emperor and Empress showed the same kindness and friendship to Mme. Le Brun as their parents and grandmother, but the time had come when she was resolved to return to France, and in spite of the entreaties of the Emperor and Empress, of her friends, and of her own regret at leaving a country to which she had become attached, she started in September, 1801, for Paris, leaving her ungrateful daughter, her unsatisfactory son-in-law, and her treacherous governess behind.

She was received with delight at her house in the *rue du Gros-Chenet*, by M. Le Brun, her brother, her sister-in-law, and their only child, the niece who was to fill her daughter's place. The house was beautifully furnished and filled with flowers, and that same evening a grand concert in her honour was given in the large *salon* of a house in a garden adjoining, which also belonged to M. Le Brun, who told her that he had during the

Revolution, when the churches were closed, lent this *salon* to celebrate mass.

The applause with which she was welcomed on entering the *salon* so overcame her that she burst into tears. Next day those of her friends who had survived the Revolution began to flock to see her. Her old friend, Mme. Bonneuil, was among the first, and invited her to a ball the following night given by her daughter, now the celebrated beauty, Mme. Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, to which she went in a dress made of the gold-embroidered India muslin given her by the unfortunate Mme. Du Barry.

There she met many old friends, and saw many new beauties, amongst others Signora Visconti, the mistress of Berthier, and another by whom she was so attracted that she involuntarily exclaimed—

“ Ah, Madame ! Comme vous êtes belle ! ”

It was Mme. Jouberton, afterwards the wife of Lucien Buonaparte.

Macdonald, Marmont, and other generals were pointed out during the evening ; it was a new world to her.

Madame Buonaparte came to see her, recalled the balls at which they had met before the Revolution, and asked her to come some day to breakfast with the First Consul. But Mme. Le Brun did not like the family or surroundings of the Buonaparte, differing so entirely as they did from the society in which she had always lived, and did not receive with much enthusiasm this invitation which was never repeated.

The Louvre, then filled with works of art—the

plunder of the rest of Europe—was naturally a great attraction, in fact so absorbed was Lisette in the wonders it contained that she was shut in when it closed, and only escaped passing the night there by knocking violently at a little door she discovered. The aspect of Paris depressed her; still in the streets were the inscriptions, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," which in France bore so horrible a meaning. Many of the friends for whom she inquired had perished on the scaffold; nearly all who survived had lost either parents, husband, wife, or some other near relation. The change in dress gave her a gloomy impression; the absence of powder, which she was accustomed to see in other countries, the numerous black coats which had displaced the gorgeous velvets, satin, and gold lace of former days—in her opinion made a theatre or an evening party look like a funeral; the manners and customs of the new society were astonishing and repulsive to her.

Still, there was at first much to attract her. The friends who had survived were delighted to have her again amongst them. Many of her foreign friends arrived in Paris; she began again to give suppers which were as popular as ever. She even gave a ball at which the celebrated dancers, M. de Trénis, Mme. Hamelin, and Mme. Demidoff, excited general admiration. She also gave private theatricals in her large gallery.

The peace of Amiens had just been signed, society was beginning to be reorganised. The Princess Dolgorouki who, to Lisette's great joy,

was in Paris, gave a magnificent ball, at which, Lisette remarked, young people of twenty saw for the first time in their lives liveries in the *salons* and ante-rooms of the ambassadors, and foreigners of distinction richly dressed, wearing orders and decorations. With several of the new beauties she was enchanted, especially Mme. Récamier and Mme. Tallien. She renewed her acquaintance with Mme. Campan, and went down to dine at her famous school at Saint Germain, where the daughters of all the most distinguished families were now being educated. Madame Murat, sister of Napoleon, was present at dinner, and the First Consul himself came to the evening theatricals, when "Esther" was acted by the pupils, Mlle. Auguier, niece of Mme. Campan, afterwards wife of Marshal Ney, taking the chief part.

The brothers of Napoleon came to see the pictures of Mme. Le Brun, which Lucien especially greatly admired.

The Princess Dolgorouki came to see her after being presented to Napoleon, and on her asking how she liked his court, replied, "It is not a court at all; it is a power."

The scarcity of women at that time and the enormous number of soldiers of all ranks gave that impression to one used to the brilliant Russian court.

But the changed aspect of Paris, the loss of so many she loved, and perhaps most of all the ungrateful conduct of her daughter, depressed Mme. Le Brun so that she lost her spirits, had a perpetual craving to be alone, and for this purpose took a

little house in the wood of Meudon, where, except for the visits of the Duchesse de Fleury and one or two other friends who lived near, she could to a certain extent indulge in her new fancy for solitude.

After a few months, however, finding that she did not become accustomed or reconciled to her surroundings, she resolved to go abroad again, and as she had never seen England she chose that country for her next wanderings, and set off in April, 1802, accompanied by a companion she had taken to live with her, named Adelaide, who soon became a dear and indispensable friend. She intended to spend only a few months in England, but as usual, when she arrived there, she soon made so much money and so many friends that she remained for three years, dividing her time between London and the country houses, where she was always welcome.

Society in London she found *triste* after the splendour of St. Petersburg and the brilliant gaiety of Paris and Vienna, declaring that what struck her most was the want of conversation, and that a favourite form of social entertainment was what was called a "rout," at which no sort of amusement or real social intercourse was offered or expected, the function merely consisting of an enormous crowd of people walking up and down the rooms, the men generally separate from the women.

However, she had plenty of interests, and made many English friends besides the numerous French *émigrés* she found there. She painted the portraits of the Prince of Wales, Lord Byron, the Comtesse de Polastron, adored by the Comte d'Artois, who was

inconsolable when she died soon afterwards, and many others—English, French, Russian, and German—and made the acquaintance of the first musicians, actors, and singers of the day ; also of the painters, many of whom were extremely jealous of her.

The Duc de Berri, second son of the Comte d'Artois, was often at her house, and she met also the sons of Philippe-Égalité, the eldest of whom was afterwards Louis-Philippe, King of France. She was in London when the news came of the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, and witnessed the outburst of horror and indignation it called forth. His father, the Duc de Bourbon, came to see her a month later, so changed by grief that she was shocked. He sat down without speaking, and then covering his face with his hands to conceal his tears, he said, "No ! I shall never get over it."

Mme. Le Brun went to all the chief watering-places—Bath, Brighton, Tunbridge Wells, Matlock, &c.—she found English life monotonous, as it certainly was in those days, and hated the climate of London ; but she had gathered round her a congenial society, with whom she amused herself very well, and whom she left with regret when she decided to return to France, partly because her ungrateful daughter had arrived there, and was being introduced by her father to many undesirable people.

She embarked with Adelaide for Rotterdam, and on arriving at Paris found her daughter, who had neither lost her good looks nor her social attractions, but was otherwise as unsatisfactory as ever. For her husband she had long ceased to care at

all. They had come to Paris to engage some artists for Prince Narischkin, and when M. Nigris returned to Russia, his wife refused to accompany him.

However, Mme. Le Brun was overjoyed to see Jeanne, and to keep her in Paris, although she refused to live with her, because the people with whom she persisted in associating were so objectionable that her mother would not meet them.

Mme. Le Brun was now virtually separated from her husband, with whom it would have been impossible for her to live unless she were prepared to allow him to spend her fortune, and reduce her to beggary. She soon collected round her a large society of friends, and resumed the *soirées* at which they amused themselves as far as possible after their old fashion, acting *tableaux vivants*, &c.

Catalani, then young and beautiful, was one of her new friends, and used to sing at her parties. She painted her portrait, and kept it as a *pendant* to the one she had done of Grassini in London.

Grassini had sung at her London parties, and comparing these two great singers and actresses—both young, beautiful, and celebrated—Mme. Le Brun found that although the voice of Catalani was in its beauty and compass one of the most extraordinary ever known, Grassini had more expression.

Amongst other old friends whom she now frequented was the Comtesse de Ségur, who equally disliked the alterations in social matters.

“You wouldn’t believe,” she said to Lisette, who came to see her at eight o’clock one evening, and found her alone, “that I have had twenty people to



Madame Vigée Le Brun

COMTESSE D'ANDLAU

To face page 152

dinner to-day? They all went away directly after the coffee."

She observed also that it was now usual for all the men to stand at one side of the room, leaving the women at the other, as if they were enemies.

The Comte de Ségur was made Master of the Ceremonies by Napoleon when he became Emperor, after which his brother used to put on his cards, "*Ségur sans cérémonies.*"

Most of the great painters were to be found at the house in the *rue du Gros-Chenet*, where the suppers were as gay and pleasant as of old.

Vien, who had been first painter to the King; Gérard, Gros, and Girodet, the great portrait painters (all pupils of David), and her old friend Robert, were constant guests. With David she was not on friendly terms; his crimes and cruelties during the Revolution caused her to regard him with horror. He had caused Robert to be arrested, and had done all he could to increase the horrors of his imprisonment. He had also tried to circulate the malicious reports about Calonne and Mme. Le Brun, of whom he was jealous, though his real love for his art made him acknowledge the excellence of her work.

One day Lisette met him at the house of Isabey, who, having been his pupil, kept friends with him out of gratitude, although his principles and actions were abhorrent to him. It happened that she was his partner at cards, and being rather *distracte*, made various mistakes, which irritated David, who was always rude and ill-tempered, and exclaimed angrily, "But you made me lose by these stupid mistakes.

Why didn't you play me your king of diamonds ?
Tell me that, I say !”

“Why ?” answered she contemptuously ; “because I know to what fate you condemn kings !”

David turned pale, made his escape, and for a long time would not go to the house for fear of meeting her.¹ She was afterwards told by Gros that David would like to go and see her, but her silence expressed her refusal. Soon after the return of Mme. Le Brun, Napoleon sent M. Denon to order from her the portrait of his sister, Caroline Murat. She did not like to refuse, although the price given (1,800 francs) was less than half what she usually got, and Caroline Murat was so insufferable that it made the process a penance. She appeared with two maids, whom she wanted to do her hair while she was being painted. On being told that this was impossible, she consented to dismiss them, but she kept Mme. Le Brun at Paris all the summer by her intolerable behaviour. She was always changing her dress or *coiffure*, which had to be painted out and done over again. She was never punctual, and often did not come at all, when she had made the appointment ; she was continually wanting alterations and giving so much trouble, that one day Mme. Le Brun remarked to M. Denon, loudly enough for her to hear—

“I have painted *real* princesses and they have never tormented or kept me waiting.”

In 1808 and 1809 Mme. Le Brun travelled in Switzerland, with which she was enraptured ; after which she bought a country house at Louveciennes,

¹ “Salons d'Autrefois” (Comtesse de Bassanville).

where in future she passed the greater part of the year, only spending the winter in Paris.

The pavilion of Mme. Du Barry had been sacked by the Revolutionists, only the walls were standing, while the palaces of Marly, Sceaux, and Bellevue had entirely disappeared.

But the woods, the meadows, the Seine, and the general beauty of the landscape delighted Mme. Le Brun, who, after all her wanderings, began to have a longing for rest, became more and more attached to her home as the years passed, and spent more and more of her time there.

The decline and fall of the Empire were no calamity to her, and she witnessed with heartfelt joy the return of the King, although she was seriously inconvenienced by the arrival of the Allies at Louveciennes in 1814. Although it was only March, she had already established herself there, and on the 31st at about eleven o'clock she had just gone to bed when the village was filled with Prussian soldiers, who pillaged the houses, and three of whom forced their way into her bedroom, accompanied by her Swiss servant Joseph, entreating and remonstrating in vain. They stole her gold snuff-box and many other things, and it was four hours before they could be got out of the house.

Next morning she escaped to St. Germain, and then to Paris, leaving Joseph to take what care he could of her property, but the wine was all drunk out of the cellar, the garden and courtyard ravaged, and the house ransacked. To all remonstrances the Prussians replied that the French had

done much worse things in Germany ; which was true enough.

With tears of joy Lisette witnessed the entry into Paris of the Comte d'Artois on April 12th and of Louis XVIII. shortly afterwards. By his side sat the Duchesse d'Angoulême, whose smiles mingled with sadness amidst the shouts of "*Vive le Roi*" ; recalled the remembrance that she was traversing the route by which her mother had passed to the scaffold.

By the King and royal family Mme. Le Brun was received with especial favour and kindness, most of the returned *émigrés* were her friends, and Paris was now again all that she wished.

From the horrors of the Revolution she had fled in time ; with the Empire and its worshippers she had never had any sympathy ; the episode of the Hundred Days was a new calamity, but when it was past and the King again restored her joy was complete.

The great picture of Marie Antoinette and her three children, which under Napoleon had been hidden away in a corner at Versailles, was taken out and exhibited at the Salon, where every one crowded to look at it. Again she painted the portraits of the royal family, contrasting the simple, gracious politeness of the Duchesse de Berri, of whom she did two portraits, with the vulgar, pretentious airs of Caroline Murat.

Her favourite picture, the Sibyl, was bought by the Duc de Berri, to whom she parted with it rather reluctantly. In 1813 M. Le Brun died. His death was rather a melancholy regret than

a real sorrow to her, as they had long been separated by mutual consent.

But that of her daughter, who still lived in Paris, and who in 1819 was seized with a sudden illness which terminated fatally, was a terrible grief to her at the time ; though in fact that selfish, heartless woman had for many years caused her nothing but vexation and sorrow, and it seems probable that after the first grief had subsided her life was happier without her, for the place she ought to have occupied had long been filled by the two nieces who were looked upon by her and by themselves as her daughters—her brother's only child, Mme. de Rivière, and Eugénie Le Brun, afterwards Mme. Tripier Le Franc.

By their affectionate and devoted love the rest of her life was made happy, even after the far greater loss in 1820 of the brother to whom she had always been deeply attached.

Louis Vigée was a charming and excellent man, well known in literary circles. He had been imprisoned for a time in Port Libre, but afterwards released.

After his death, in order to distract her mind from the sorrow of it, she made a tour to Orleans, Blois, Tours, Bordeaux, &c., accompanied by her faithful Adelaide ; after which she returned home and resumed her usual life, a happy and prosperous one, continually occupied by her beloved painting, surrounded by numbers of friends and adored by the two nieces, her adopted children. Eugénie Le Brun was like herself, a portrait painter, and although not, of course, of world-wide fame like

her aunt, she was nevertheless a good artist, and made a successful career, which gave an additional interest to the life of Mme. Le Brun.

Her winters were spent at Paris, where her house was still the resort of all the most distinguished, the most intellectual, and the pleasantest people, French and foreign; the summers at her beloved country home at Louveciennes.

Thus happily and peacefully the rest of her life flowed on; her interest in all political and social matters—art, science, and literature—remaining undiminished, her affection for old friends unaltered, while new ones were constantly added to the number, until on May 29, 1842, she died at the age of eighty-seven.

She had painted 662 portraits, 15 pictures, 200 landscapes, many of them in Switzerland, and many pastels.

II

LA MARQUISE DE MONTAGU

CHAPTER I

The House of Noailles—The court of Louis XV.—The Dauphin—The Dauphine—An evil omen—The Queen—The Convent of Fontevault—Death of Mme. Thérèse—The Infanta—Madame Henriette and the Duc d'Orléans—Mesdames Victoire, Sophie, and Louise.

ANNE PAULE DOMINIQUE DE NOAILLES was by birth, character, education, and surroundings a complete contrast to our last heroine. She belonged to the great house of Noailles, being the fourth of the five daughters of the Duc d'Ayen, eldest son of the Maréchal Duc de Noailles, a brilliant courtier high in the favour of Louis XV.

The Duchesse d'Ayen was the only daughter of M. d'Aguesseau de Fresne, *Conseiller d'état*, and granddaughter of the great Chancellor d'Aguesseau. From her mother, daughter of M. Dupré, *conseiller du parlement*, she inherited a fortune of 200,000 *livres de rente*, in consequence of which her family were able to arrange her marriage with the young heir of the Noailles, then Comte d'Ayen.

The d'Aguesseau, *qualifiés barons* in 1683, were amongst the most respected of the *noblesse de robe*, but their position was not, of course, to be compared to that of the de Noailles, and Mlle.

d'Aguesseau was all the more pleased with the brilliant prospect before her, since her future husband was violently in love with her, and although a lad of sixteen, two years younger than herself, was so handsome, charming, and attractive, that she, in her calmer way, returned his affection.

And a lad of sixteen at the court of Louis XV. was very different from the average lad of that age in these days and this country, a shy, awkward schoolboy who knows nothing of the world or society, can only talk to other boys, and cares for nothing except sports and games. In the France, or at any rate the Paris, of those days, he was already a man and a courtier, probably a soldier, sometimes a husband and father.¹

Likewise girls at fourteen or fifteen and even younger, who, with us, wear their hair down their backs, their petticoats half way up to their knees, and spend their time in lessons and play, were wives, mothers, court beauties, and distinguished members of society at the French Court of those days.

The marriage took place in February, 1755, when the cold was so intense that the navigation of the Seine was stopped by the ice, which at that time, when traffic was carried on chiefly by means of the rivers, was a serious inconvenience.² After the wedding the Comte and Comtesse d'Ayen went to live with his parents at the stately *hôtel de*

¹ "Journal de Barbier, Chronique de la Régence, 1755."

² The Duc de Bourbon was only sixteen when his son, the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, was born.

Noailles, now degraded into the *hôtel St. James*, while the vast, shady gardens that surrounded it¹ have long disappeared; shops and houses covering the ground where terraces, fountains, beds of flowers, and masses of tall trees then formed a scene of enchantment.

The family of *Noailles* was a large and powerful one, and, as Louis XVIII. remarks in his *Memoires*, "*Les Noailles . . . étaient unis comme chair et ongle*,"² and having been loaded with favours by Louis XIV. and Louis XV., seemed to think they had a natural right to all the best posts and highest honours.³

In the family of *Noailles* there had been six Marshals of France, and at the time of the marriage, the old *Maréchal de Noailles*, grandfather of the Count, was still living.⁴ At his death, his son, also *Maréchal*, became of course *Duc de Noailles*, and his son, the husband of *Mlle. d'Aguesseau*, *Duc d'Ayen*, by which name it will be most convenient to call him to avoid confusion, from the beginning of this biography.

The *Duc d'Ayen*, though always retaining a deep affection for his wife, spent a great part of his time away from her. He was one of the most conspicuous and brilliant figures at the court, and besides entering eagerly into all its pleasures, dissipation, and extravagance, was a member of the Academy of Science; and although by no means an atheist or an enemy of religion, associated constantly with the "philosophers," whose ideas

¹ They reached to the Tuileries.

² "*Mémoires de Louis XVIII.*," t. ii., p. 19.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴ He died in 1766.

and opinions he, like many of the French nobles in the years preceding the Revolution, had partly adopted, little imagining the terrible consequences that would result from them.

Not so the Duchess, his wife. Brought up first in a convent and then under the care of her father, whose household, like those of many of the *noblesse de robe*, was regulated by a strictness and gravity seldom to be seen amongst the rest of the French nobles, Mme. d'Ayen cared very little for society, and preferred to stay at home absorbed in religious duties, charities, and domestic affairs, while her husband amused himself as he chose.

The power, security, and prosperity of the throne and royal family of France seemed to be at that time absolute and unassailable; and although of the ten or eleven children of Louis XV. and Marie Leczinska, the Dauphin was the only son who had lived to grow up, the succession to the crown appeared to be in no danger, as he had already two boys, the Ducs de Bourgogne and Berri; the Comte de Provence was born in November, 1755, and his birth was followed by that of the Comte d'Artois, besides the Princesses Clotilde and Elizabeth, who by the Salic law were excluded. The Queen, who was seven years older than the King, was already fifty-two. A woman of blameless character, she had never been pretty, attractive, or even sensible. D'Argenson, writing in 1750, says of her that she was very stupid, made silly remarks, reproved her children for trifles, and passed over serious faults. They were all so fond of eating that Mesdames kept port wine, ham, and other

things in a cupboard, and ate and drank at all hours.

Louis XV., at this time about forty-five, extremely handsome, immersed in a life of pleasure, magnificence, and vice, was then under the domination of the Duchesse de Châteauroux, *maîtresse en titre*, the youngest of the five daughters of the Marquis de Nesle, four of whom had been for a longer or shorter period the mistresses of Louis XV. That such a father as the King should have had such a son as the Dauphin is astonishing indeed. The author of some fascinating memoirs of the day writes of him, "If I have not yet spoken of M. le Dauphin, do not suppose that it is from negligence or distraction, it is because the thought of his death always envelopes my mind like a funeral pall. His premature end is ever present with me, and is a subject of regret and affliction which I cannot approach without terrible emotion. He was so grievously mourned for, he has been so universally and justly praised, that there would not be much left me to tell you if I were not to speak of his perfect beauty, which was the least of his perfections, and which perhaps for that very reason, the writers of his time never mention. . . . His face and figure were perfectly formed ; and he had, especially in the movement of his lips and the gentle, melancholy pride of his great black eyes, an expression which I have never seen unless perhaps in some old picture of the Spanish school . . . he might have been an archangel of Murillo. . . . He carried with him the happiness of France and the peace of the world, but one felt that it would have

been perfect happiness, and that one would never experience it. The subjects, perhaps the family of the King his father had provoked such terrible chastisements, that we may sorrowfully say that France and the French of the eighteenth century were not worthy to be ruled by the Dauphin Louis."¹

Of the Dauphine, Marie-Josèphe de Saxe, as well as of his father, their son the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., writes in his Memoirs as follows: "His pure soul could not rest on this earth, his crown was not of this world, and he died young. France had to mourn the premature death of a prince, who, if he had lived might perhaps have saved the kingdom from the catastrophe of a blood-stained revolution, and his family from exile and the scaffold.

"My mother, worthy to be the wife of the Dauphin . . . was, like him, good, pious, indulgent, attached to her duties, caring only for the happiness of others, loving the French as her own family. Her character, naturally grave and melancholy, was not without a gentle gaiety, which lent her an additional charm. . . . With all the philosophy of which some narrow minds have accused me as of a crime . . . I have sometimes found myself, in the midst of great calamities, invoking the holy spirit of my mother and that of my august father."²

The Dauphin's eldest son, the Duc de Bourgogne, died in early childhood, leaving a fearful inheritance to his next brother, the Duc de Berri, afterwards Louis XVI. From his very birth ill-luck seemed to

¹ "Souvenirs de Créquy."

² "Mémoires de Louis XVIII.," t. 1, p. 7.

overshadow him. The Dauphine was at Choisy-le-roy when he was born, and none of the royal family arrived in time to be present. The courier sent to Paris to announce the news fell from his horse at the *barrière* and was killed. The Abbe de Saujon, sent for to baptise him privately, was stricken with paralysis on the great staircase at Versailles. Of the three wet-nurses chosen for him two died within the week, and the third was seized with small-pox in six weeks.

“All this is not of good omen,” said the King, his grandfather, “and I don’t know how it can have happened that I have made him Duc de Berri ; it is an unlucky name.”¹

“Mesdames de France,” the King’s daughters, of whom there had been seven or eight, were now reduced to five, four of whom were unmarried. Nothing is more characteristic of the period than the way these princesses were brought up and educated ; and the light thrown upon manners and customs early in the eighteenth century gives interest to all the details concerning them.

The Queen had bad health and saw very little of them, although she loved them in her apathetic way, but she was too much occupied with her devotions, her nerves, and her health to trouble herself much about them. If there was going to be a thunder-storm, or she was nervous and could not go to sleep, she would make one of her ladies sit by her bed all night, holding her hand and telling her stories. On

¹ “Voilà qui n’est pas d’un heureux augure, et je ne sais comment il a pu se faire que je l’aie titré Duc de Berry : c’est un nom qui porte malheur.”

one occasion, after the death of the King's mistress, the Duchesse de Châteauroux, she was dreadfully afraid lest she should see her ghost, and so tormented the lady-in-waiting who sat by her, that she at last exclaimed—

“But your Majesty must remember that even if the Duchess were to return to re-visit us, it would not be your Majesty she would come after.”

The King was very fond of his daughters, but had no idea of bringing them up properly. The four younger ones were sent to the convent of Fontevrault, in Anjou, to be educated, and as they never came home and were never visited by their parents, they were strangers to each other when, after twelve years, the two youngest came back. As to the others, Madame Victoire returned when she was fourteen, and Madame Thérèse, who was called Madame Sixième, because she was the sixth daughter of the King, died when she was eight years old at Fontevrault.

A *fête* was given to celebrate the recovery of the King from an illness; at which the little princess, although very unwell, insisted on being present. The nuns gave way, though the child was very feverish and persisted in sitting up very late. The next day she was violently ill with small-pox, and died.

The three eldest princesses, who had always remained at court, were, Louise-Elizabeth, called Madame;¹ handsome, clever, and ambitious; who was married to the Duke of Parma, Infant of Spain,

¹ The Duchess of Parma died 1759.

a younger son of Philip V., consequently her cousin.¹

Next came her twin sister, Henriette, from whom she had parted almost heart-broken, when she reluctantly left France for Parma. Henriette was the King's favourite daughter, the best and most charming of all the princesses. Lovely, gentle, and saintly, the Duc de Chartres² was deeply in love with her and she with him. The King was disposed to allow the marriage, but was dissuaded by Cardinal Fleury. If the Infanta had been in question she would have got her own way, but Henriette was too yielding and submissive. She died at twenty-five years of age, of the small-pox, so fatal to her race (1752) to the great grief of the court and royal family, and especially of the King, by whom she was adored.

At the time of the marriage of the young M. and Mme. d'Ayen, the Princesse Adélaïde had to some extent, though never entirely, succeeded the Princesse Henriette in the King's affection, and was now supposed to be his favourite daughter. She had, however, none of her elder sister's charm, gentleness, or beauty; being rather plain, with a voice like that of a man. She had a strong, decided character, and more brains than her younger sisters, Victoire, Sophie, and Louise; she was fond of study, especially of music, Italian, and mathematics.

Two or three years before the marriage of the

¹ Philippe V., grandson of Louis XIV., second son of Louis, le Grand Dauphin. His right to the crown of Spain was disputed in the War of Succession.

² Afterwards Duc d'Orléans, grandson of the Regent,

young M. and Mme. d'Ayen, his father the Duke, who was captain in the *gardes-du-corps*,¹ was consulted by one of the guards of his regiment, who in much perplexity showed him a costly snuff-box which had been mysteriously sent him, and in which was a note as follows: "*Ceci vous sera précieux ; ou vous avertira bientôt de quelle main il vient.*"²

The Duke, whose suspicions were aroused, told the King, who desired to see the snuff-box, and recognised it as one he had given to Madame Adélaïde. It appeared that that young princess, then twenty years old, had taken a fancy to the *garde-du-corps*, who was very good-looking. The King gave him a pension of 4,000 *louis* to go away for a long time to the other end of the kingdom, and the affair was at an end.³

Each of the princesses had her own household, and when mere children they gave balls and received the ambassadors. It was the custom that in the absence of the King, Queen, and Dauphin, the watchword should be given to the sentinel by the eldest princess present. On one occasion when this was Madame Adélaïde, her governess, then the Duchesse de Tallard, complained to Cardinal Fleury that it was not proper for the princess, being a young girl, to whisper in a man's ear. The Cardinal spoke to the King, who decided that although Madame Adélaïde must still give the *consigne*, she

¹ The *gardes-du-corps* were all gentlemen.

² This will be precious to you ; you will soon be told from whom it comes.

³ "Journal d'Argenson."



Nattier

MADAME ADELAÏDE

To face page 170

should first ask her governess the name of which saint she was to say.

Madame Victoire was very pretty, all the rest except the two eldest, were plain ; and her parents were delighted with her when she returned from the convent. The King and Dauphin went to meet her at Sceaux and took her to Versailles to the Queen, who embraced her tenderly. Neither she nor her younger sisters were half educated, but the Dauphin, who was very fond of them and had great influence over them persuaded them to study.

When first Madame Victoire appeared at court her sisters, Henriette and Adélaïde, and her brother the Dauphin, who were inseparable, were inclined to find her in the way and treat her as a child, but they soon became very fond of her, and she at once had her own household and took part in all the court gaieties as her sisters had done from the earliest age.

The Queen, too indolent to write to them separately, on one occasion when she was at Compiègne and they at Versailles, wrote as follows :—

“ *J’embrasse la gracieuse souveraine,¹ la sainte Henriette, la ridicule Adélaïde la belle Victoire.*”

Henriette and Adélaïde were devoted to their old governess, the Duchesse de Ventadour. They got her an *appartement* next to theirs at Versailles, and in her *salon*, amongst her friends, they always spent an hour or two every evening after supper. Madame Henriette used to say it was the happiest part of her day. The Duchesse de Ventadour was an excellent woman, though she had been rather *galante*¹ in her

¹ “ Mesdames de France ” (Barthélemy).

youth. She and her mother had brought up twenty-three "Children of France." The mother was said to have saved the life of Louis XV. by giving him a counter-poison.

CHAPTER II

The Greatest Names in France—The Maréchale de Noailles—
Strange proceedings—Death of the Dauphin—Of the Dauphine
—Of the Queen—The Children of France—Louis XIV. and
Louis XV.

“THE first family in France after the royal family, is evidently that of Lorraine; the second without dispute that of Rohan, and the third La Tour d’Auvergne, or Bouillon-Turenne, after that La Trémoille,”¹ and then come a whole string of illustrious names, Mailly-de-Nesle, Créquy, Harcourt, Clermont-Tonnerre, Saint Jean, Thoury; Sabran, La Rochefoucauld, Montmorency, Narbonne-Pelet, Béthune, Beauvoir, Beaufremont, Villeneuve (premier Marquis de France), and many others.

The writer of these fascinating memoirs of the time proceeds, after speaking of various noble names and regretting many that were extinct, such as Lusignan, Coucy, Xaintrilles, Châtillon, Montgommery, &c., to say, “One thing that has always given me the best opinion of the Noailles, is the protection they have never ceased to grant to all gentlemen who can prove that they have the honour

¹ “Créquy Souvenirs.”

to belong to them, no matter what their position nor how distant the relationship." He (or she)[†] goes on to relate that a family of much less consideration, the Montmorin, being envious of the Noailles, asserted that they were not of the ancient noblesse, and pretended that they possessed a piece of tapestry on which a Noailles was depicted serving a Montmorin as a *maître d'hôtel*, with the date 1593.

But as the Noailles were known to have possessed the estate and castle bearing their name in the twelfth century, and that in 1593 the Seigneur de Noailles was also Comte d'Ayen, and of much more consequence than the Montmorin, this spiteful fabrication fell to the ground.

Nobody ever saw the tapestry in question because it did not exist, and Louis XV., speaking of the story, said scornfully, "Have there ever been such things as tapestries *chez les Montmorin*?"

For no one knew better than he did the histories and genealogies of his *noblesse*, and that he did not hesitate to explain them even when to his own disadvantage, the following anecdote shows:—

A discussion was going on about the great difficulty of proving a descent sufficiently pure to gain admittance into the order of the Knights of Malta.

"You think me *de très bonne maison*, don't you?" said the King; "well, I myself should find difficulty in entering that order, because in the female line I descend in the eighth degree from a *procureur*."

[†] The fascinating volumes, called "Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy," are said not to be by any means entirely written by that celebrated woman. But they contain much curious information and many amusing anecdotes of that day, and present a vivid picture of the eighteenth century in France.

There was a general exclamation of dissent, but the King replied—

“I am not joking, Messieurs, and I am going to give you the proof of what I say. Griffet, the *procureur*, who was one of my ancestors, made a large fortune and gave his daughter in legitimate marriage to a *Sieur Babou de la Bourdoisie*, a ruined gentleman, who wanted to regild his shield. From this union was born a daughter who was beautiful and rich, and married the *Marquis de Cœuvres*. Everyone knows that of *la belle Gabrielle*, daughter of this *Marquis*, and *Henri IV.*, was born a son, *César de Vendôme*; he had a daughter who married the *Duc de Nemours*. The *Duchesse de Nemours* had a daughter who married the *Duke of Savoy*, and of this marriage was born *Adélaïde of Savoy*, my mother, who was the eighth in descent of that genealogy. So after that you may believe whether great families are without alloy.”¹

The *Noailles*, unlike most of the great French families, although they lived in Paris during the winter, spent a portion of their time on their estates, looked after their people, and occupied themselves with charities and devotion. The *Maréchal de Mouchy de Noailles*, brother of the *Duc d’Ayen*, even worked with his own hands amongst his peasants, while his wife and daughter, *Mme. de Duras*, shared his views and the life he led, as did his sons, the *Prince de Poix* and the *Vicomte de Noailles*, of whom more will be said later.

With these and all the different relations of her husband, *Mme. d’Ayen* lived in the greatest har-

¹ “*Salons d’Autrefois*” (*Bassanville*).

mony, especially with his sister, the Duchesse de Lesparre, a calm, holy, angelic woman after her own heart.

With his other sister, the Comtesse de Tessé, she was not at first so intimate. For Mme. de Tessé, a brisk, clever, amusing, original person, was not only a friend of Voltaire, and a diligent frequenter of the *salons* of the philosophers, wits, and encyclopædists, but, although not going to their extreme lengths, was rather imbued with their opinions.

But the most extraordinary and absurd person in the family was the Maréchale de Noailles, mother of the Duc d'Ayen, whose eccentricity was such that she might well have been supposed to be mad. It was, however, only upon certain points that her delusions were so singular—otherwise she seems to have been only an eccentric person, whose ideas of rank and position amounted to a mania.

She had a large picture painted by Boucher, in which all her grandnephews were represented as Cupids, with nothing on but the Order of the Grand Cross of Malta, to show their right to belong to it. None of the family could look at or speak of it with gravity. But what was a more serious matter was her passion for stealing relics and objects of religious value. She even mixed one into a medicine for her son, the Duc d'Ayen, when he had the measles. This had been lent her by some nuns, who of course could never get it back again. The nuns were very angry, so were the Archbishop of Paris and the Bishop of Chartres; she had also stolen a beautiful chalice and they refused to give her the Holy Communion. Her

family were much disturbed and had considerable trouble in getting her out of the difficulties and trying to hush up the affair.

She also used to write letters to the holy Virgin, which she hid in a dovecote, in which she always found answers, supposed to be written by her priest. On one occasion she complained that the way of addressing her, "*Ma chère Maréchale,*" was not quite respectful in *une petite bourgeoise de Nazareth*, but observed that as she was the mother of our Saviour she must not be exacting; besides, St. Joseph belonged to the royal house of David, and she added, "I have always thought St. Joseph must have belonged to a younger branch, sunk by injustice or misfortune."

The Abbess of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, hearing that a pilgrim was in the habit of coming into the Abbey Church during dinner time when nobody was there, had her watched, and discovered that it was the Duchesse de Noailles, who would stand for an interminable time before a statue of the Virgin, talking and even seeming to dispute with it.

One day she arrived, and after many bows and speeches began to address her prayers to the holy Virgin, and it appeared that what she asked for was in the first place a sum of eighteen hundred thousand livres for her husband, the Maréchal, then the Order of the Garter, which he wanted because it was the only great order not possessed by his family, and finally the *diplôme* of a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, because it was the only title he did not already bear.

Suddenly a shrill voice was heard from the altar,

saying, "Mme. la Maréchale, you will not have the eighteen hundred thousand francs that you ask for your husband, he has already one hundred thousand *écus de rente*, and that is enough; he is already Duke, Peer, Grandee of Spain, and Marshal of France; he has already the orders of the Saint-Esprit and the Golden Fleece; your family is loaded with the favours of the court; if you are not content it is because it is impossible to satisfy you; and I advise you to renounce becoming a princess of the Empire. Your husband will not have the garter of St. George either."

The Maréchale thought it was the Holy Child Himself speaking, and called out to Him to be quiet and let His Mother speak; when a burst of laughter was heard from behind the altar. It was the Vicomte de Chabrilan, one of the Queen's pages, the little nephew of the coadjutrice of the Abbey, who had hidden there to play a trick.

But fantastic and ridiculous as she was, the old Maréchale went bravely to the scaffold years afterwards and died without fear.

Her daughter-in-law seems to have got on very well with her, and with all her husband's family. Besides the Maréchal de Mouchy, there was another brother, the Marquis de Noailles, and numbers of other relations, nearly all united by the strongest affection and friendship.

The year 1765 witnessed the death of the Dauphin, and soon after that of the Dauphine, who was broken-hearted at his loss. The Dauphin died of a wasting illness, to the great grief of the King, who stood leaning against the doorway of



COMTE D'ARTOIS, AFTERWARDS CHARLES X.

his son's room, holding by the hand the Duc de Berri, until all was over. Then, turning away, he led the boy to the apartment of the Dauphine to acquaint her with what had happened, by giving the order to announce "the King and Monseigneur le Dauphin."[†]

The Queen died three years later. Her death did not make much difference to the court, but devotion to religion in the royal family now seemed to be concentrated in the households of Mesdames.

From the care of the Dauphin and Dauphine, who had exercised the most affectionate supervision over them, their children passed to that of their grandfather, who, though he was fond of his daughters, cared very little about his grandchildren, never inquiring about their studies, conduct or habits. He only saw them at the hours required by etiquette, when he embraced them with ceremony; but he took care that they were treated with all the homage due to the "Children of France," and gave orders that their wishes were always to be gratified.

The late Dauphin was said to have regarded with especial affection the unlucky Duc de Berri, who was awkward, plain, brusque, and dull; but the favourite of Louis XV. was his youngest grandson, the handsome, mischievous Comte d'Artois, in whom he recognised something of his own disposition, and upon whom he was often seen to look with a smile of satisfaction.

Between Mesdames and their nephews and nieces

[†] There are one or two different accounts of this.

there was always the most tender affection. They had adored their brother, were inconsolable for his loss, and devoted to his children, whom they spoilt to their hearts' content, giving them everything they liked, and allowing any amount of noise, disturbance, and mischief to go on in their presence. Madame Adélaïde, who was extremely fond of the eldest boy, would say to him, "Talk at your ease, Berri, shout like your brother Artois. Make a noise, break my porcelaines, but make yourself talked about."

Madame Victoire's favourite was the Comte de Provence. She found that he had the most sense and brains, and prophesied that he would repair the faults his brothers would commit.

The King, after the death of Mme. de Pompadour, of whom he had become tired, lived for some years without a reigning favourite, in spite of the attempts of various ladies of the court to attain to that post. His life was passed in hunting, in the festivities of the court, and in a constant succession of intrigues and *liaisons* for which the notorious *Parc aux cerfs* was a sort of preserve. His next and last recognised and powerful mistress was Mme. Du Barry.

Amongst other contrasts to be remarked between Louis XIV. and Louis XV., was the opposite way in which they treated their numerous illegitimate children.

Those of the *Grand Monarque* were brought up in almost royal state, magnificently dowered, raised to a rank next to the princes of the blood, amongst whom they were generally married, and with whom they kept up constant quarrels and rivalry.

The King regarded them with nearly, if not quite, as great affection as his legitimate children, and even tried, though in vain, to alter the laws of succession in their favour, and allow them to inherit the crown failing his lawful issue.

This, however, neither the Princes of the blood, the nobles, nor the French nation would stand, and the project had to be relinquished ; but the rapacity and outrageous arrogance and pretensions of "*les bâtards*," as they were called, had aroused such irritation and hatred that Louis XV. took care to go into the opposite extreme. Unlike his predecessor, he cared nothing for the children of his innumerable *liaisons*, which were of a lower and more degraded type than those of his great-grandfather. He seldom recognised or noticed these children, made only a very moderate provision for them, and allowed them to be of no importance whatever.

CHAPTER III

The Duchesse d'Ayen—Birth and death of her sons—Her five daughters—Their education at home—Saintly life of the Duchess—Marriage of her eldest daughter to the Vicomte de Noailles—Of the second to the Marquis de la Fayette—Of the Dauphin to the Archduchess Marie Antoinette—The Comtesse de Noailles—Marriages of the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois to the Princesses of Sardinia—Death of Louis XV.—Unhappy marriage of the third daughter of the Duc d'Ayen to the Vicomte du Roure—Afterwards to Vicomte de Thésan—Paulette and Rosalie de Noailles—Adrienne de la Fayette—Radical ideas of the Vicomte de Noailles and Marquis de la Fayette—Displeasure of the family and the King—La Fayette and de Noailles join the American insurgents—Grief and heroism of Adrienne—Marriage of Pauline to the Marquis de Montagu.

TWO years after her marriage the Duchesse d'Ayen had a son who, to her great grief, lived only a few months, and whose death was followed by the birth of Louise, called Mlle. de Noailles, Adrienne Mlle. d'Ayen, Thérèse Mlle. d'Épernon, Pauline Mlle. de Maintenon, and Rosalie Mlle. de Montclar.

In 1768, a year after the birth of her youngest girl, she had another boy, and at the same time was dangerously ill of small-pox. The Duke, in terror for her life, would not allow her to be told what was

the matter, and even insisted on the children all being admitted to her room, for fear of arousing her suspicions and alarming her. However, she recovered and none of them took it. The baby lived and for some time appeared quite well; though after a few months it began to fade, and soon died of consumption.

This was a severe disappointment to the Duke, who had already begun to occupy himself with his son's future, but the Duchess, whose saintly mind had been tormented with misgivings about the future life of the boy whose prospects then seemed so brilliant and so full of temptations, and who did not probably consider the Duke, her husband, a very promising or trustworthy guide and example, resigned herself to the loss of the heir, whom she had even in her prayers entreated God to take out of this world rather than allow him to be tainted by the vice and corruption with which she foresaw he would be surrounded in it.

She considered that the death of the child was the answer to her prayer; never, from the moment he began to ail, having the least hope of his recovery, subduing her grief with all the strength of her character and religious fervour, and devoting herself entirely to the care and education of her daughters.

They were not, according to the general custom, sent to a convent, but brought up at home under her constant supervision. The frequent absence of the Duke, who was usually either at Versailles or with the army,¹ left them to her undivided care. They

¹ The Duc d'Ayen was in 1755 Colonel of the regiment of

had an excellent governess, but the Duchess herself superintended their studies, they went to mass with her every morning at the Jacobins or St. Roch, dined with her at three o'clock, and spent always some time afterwards in her room, which was very large, was hung with crimson and gold damask, and contained an immense bed.

The Duchess sat by the fire in her armchair, surrounded by her books, her work, and her gold snuff-box; the children sat round her, also reading, working, or talking of anything that interested them.

Every now and then they made excursions to Meudon, where they rode upon donkeys, or they visited their grandfathers, M. d'Aguesseau, at Fresne, and the Duc de Noailles at Saint Germain-en-Laye, when they delighted in playing and wandering in the forest.

Often in after years did they look back to the happy, sheltered childhood that passed too quickly away, and contrast its peace, security, and magnificence with the sorrows, dangers, and hardships of their later lives.

They were all, during their early youth, rather afraid of their father, of whom they saw so little that he was a stranger to them in comparison with the mother they all adored, who, exalted as were her religious principles, austere and saintly her rule of life, yet knew how to gain her children's confidence

Noailles—cavalry raised by his grandfather at his own expense during the War of the Spanish Succession; he had made four campaigns in the Seven Years' War, and was now Lieut.-General and Captain of the *Gardes-du-corps*.

and affection, and understood thoroughly their different characters and tendencies. People wondered at the goodness of Mme. d'Ayen's children, and it was remarked that the Duchess "had brought up a company of angels."

Louise, whose fate was so closely linked with her mother's, was one of those gentle, saintly characters, who scarcely seem to belong to this earth; whose thoughts, interests, and aspirations are in another world. But perhaps the most striking amongst them was Adrienne, the second girl, who besides being very handsome, was the most intellectual and talented of the sisters, and of whom the Duchess was as proud as the severity of her ideas permitted her to be.

While Louise and Adrienne were still children projects of marriage for them were, of course, discussed, and they were only about thirteen and fourteen when two sons-in-law were approved of and accepted by their parents, with the condition that the proposed arrangements should not be communicated to the young girls for a year, during which they would be allowed often to meet and become well acquainted with their future husbands.

The one proposed for Louise was the second son of her uncle, the Maréchal Mouchy de Noailles, a lad of sixteen, who bore the title of Vicomte de Noailles, and was in rank, fortune, and character an extremely suitable marriage for her.

For Adrienne, the Marquis de la Fayette, a boy who when first the marriage was thought of by the respective families was not fifteen years old, whose father was dead, who had been brought up by his

aunt in the country, and who was very rich. He was plain, shy, awkward, and had red hair, but he and Adrienne fell violently in love with each other during the time of probation. Louise and her cousin had, of course, always known each other, and now that they were thrown constantly together they were delighted with the arrangements made for them.

The marriages accordingly took place when Louise was sixteen and Adrienne fifteen years old.

Their aunt, the *Maréchale de Mouchy*, called then the *Comtesse de Noailles*, was about this time appointed first lady of honour to the Archduchess Marie Antoinette of Austria, whose approaching marriage with the Dauphin was the great event of the day; and was sent with the other distinguished persons selected to meet her at the frontier. This alliance was very unpopular with the royal family and court, who disliked Austria and declared that country to be the enemy of France, to whom her interests were always opposed. Madame Adélaïde especially, made no secret of her displeasure, and when M. Campan came to take her orders before setting off for the frontier with the household of the Dauphin, she said that she disapproved of the marriage of her nephew with the Archduchess, and if she had any order to give it would not be to fetch an Austrian.

The *Comtesse de Noailles* was a most unfortunate choice to have made for the post in question; for although a woman of the highest character, religious, charitable, and honourable, she was so stiff, precise,

and absolutely the slave of every detail of court etiquette that she only tormented and estranged the young girl, who was ready to be conciliated, and whom she might have influenced and helped. The Dauphine, however, an impetuous, thoughtless girl of fifteen, accustomed to the freedom of her own family life at the court of Vienna, hated and ridiculed the absurd restrictions of the French Court, called the Countess "*Madame l'Etiquette*," and took her own way.

The ill-luck which seemed to follow the Dauphin had not forsaken him ; a terrible catastrophe marked the *fêtes* given in honour of his wedding. Some scaffolding in the *place Louis XV.* caught fire. The flames spread with fearful rapidity, a scene of panic and horror ensued, hundreds were burned or trampled to death by the frantic horses or maddened crowd ; and with this terrible calamity began the married life of the boy and girl, the gloom and darkness of whose destiny it seemed to foreshadow.[†]

The Comtes de Provence and d'Artois were married to the two daughters of the King of Sardinia, to whose eldest son the Princess Clotilde was betrothed.

The King associated all his grandchildren with Mme. Du Barry just as he had his daughters with the Duchesse de Châteauroux and her sisters de Nesle,

[†] The Empress Maria Thérèse once asked a person who had the reputation of having second sight to tell her the destiny of this, her youngest child. He looked at her, suddenly hesitated, turned pale, and on the Empress repeating her question, he replied, with much agitation, "Madame, there is a cross for every one to bear."

and affairs went on at court much in the usual way until, in 1774, he caught the small-pox in one of his intrigues and died, leaving a troubled and dangerous inheritance to the weak, helpless, vacillating lad, who had neither brains to direct, energy to act, or strength to rule.

In 1779 Mlle. d'Épernon, third daughter of the Duc d'Ayen, married the Vicomte du Roure. She was a gentle, affectionate girl of less decided character than the others, and less is known of her, for her life was a short one passed in domestic retirement. This marriage was unhappy, as the Vicomte cared very little for his wife. However, he died in two years, and in 1784 she married the Vicomte de Thésan, an ardent Royalist who was devoted to her.¹

Married or single, the five sisters were all strongly

¹ In the souvenirs of the Marquise de Créquy the following paragraph occurs:—"My Aunt de la Trémoille was the last of the ancient house of La Fayette, which must not be confounded with that of the philosophic, republican Marquis, who has just been fighting in America. Marie Madeline, heiress and Marquise de la Fayette, Duchesse de la Trémoille and Thouars, died in 1717 at the age of twenty-eight; and it was at this time that a gentleman of Auvergne named Motier took it into his head to adjust the name of La Fayette, which had just become extinct, to the fine name of Motier, which was that of his family. He gave as his reason that several persons of the true house of La Fayette had borne the name of Moztier or Moustier in the seventeenth century. . . . The Maréchal de Noailles told me that Louis XV. had said to him *à propos* of the genealogy of this pretended Marquis: 'Have you read the romance of the Motier family? It will never equal that of Mme. de la Fayette' (author of 'La Princesse de Clères'). We could never understand how the MM. de Noailles could give one of their daughters to that little Motier; but they assured us that he was gentleman enough not to be hanged, very rich, and a very good fellow."

attached to one another. The married ones were a great deal with their family, either at Paris or Versailles, while Pauline and Rosalie, between whom there was only a year's difference, were inseparable.

The real names of Mlle. de Maintenon were Anne Paule Dominique, which, sonorous as they sound, were those of a poor old man and woman of the labouring class whom the Duchess had chosen to be her daughter's godfather and godmother.

Pauline was very pretty, a *brunette* with dark eyes and masses of dark hair, of an impetuous, affectionate, hasty disposition, which she was always trying to correct according to the severe, almost ascetic, counsels of her mother and younger sister, whom one cannot but fancy, though equally admirable, was perhaps less charming.

Rosalie was rather plain, with irregular but expressive features, small eyes and a chin inclined to be square and decided ; she was precocious for her age, but good-tempered, calm, and possessing great strength of character.

She married, in 1788, the Marquis de Grammont.

The anxieties and sorrows of life were already gathering round the girls thrust so early into the burden and heat of the day.

Adrienne, who with more intellectual gifts had also more human passion in her nature than her saintly elder sister, adored her husband, under whose shy, awkward manner she had discovered all sorts of excellent qualities, an enthusiastic love of liberty, talents and aspirations with which she ardently sympathised,

His devotion to herself was only interfered with by his political ideas ; but it soon appeared that this interference was a very serious matter, for in 1777 he announced his intention of going to America to fight for the colonies then in rebellion against England.

Of course this spread consternation in the family of Noailles, usually so united that nothing of importance was ever done by them without a family council. And it was certainly irritating enough, that for no reason whatever except his own fancy he should desert his wife who adored him, who had one child and was about to have another, the management of his estates and all his duties in his own country, and exile himself for years to fight against a friendly nation and meddle in a quarrel with which neither he nor France had anything whatever to do. Besides, his example and influence had induced his brother-in-law, the Vicomte de Noailles, and his cousin, the Comte de Ségur, to adopt the same plans. All three young men declared they would go to America to fight for liberty.

The King heard of it, and formally forbade them to go, which, as far as de Noailles and de Ségur were concerned, put a stop to the plan for the present. But La Fayette was his own master and had plenty of money, so he made the excuse of going to England with his cousin, the Prince de Poix, and on his way back escaped in a Spanish ship and landed in Spain *en route* for America.

The Duc d'Ayen got a *lettre de cachet* from the King to stop him, but it was too late. Letters were

sent by the family to say that Adrienne was very ill, and by this he was so far influenced that he set out on his journey homewards, but finding from other letters he received that she was in no danger at all, he turned back again.

Adrienne had never opposed his going. Divided between her grief at their separation, her sympathy with his dreams and ideas, and her dislike to oppose his wishes, she, though nearly heartbroken, pretended to be cheerful, stifled her tears, and forced herself to smile and laugh, though her love for him was such that she said she felt as if she would faint when he left her even for a short time, a few hours.

The years of separation while he was in America were most trying, and her sister, Louise de Noailles, shared her anxiety, as the Vicomte de Noailles and Comte de Ségur joined the Americans in 1779.

The high rank, great connections, and splendid fortunes of the daughters of the Duc d'Ayen caused them to be much sought after, and many brilliant marriages were suggested for Pauline, amongst which they chose a young officer of the regiment of Artois, proposed to them by a relation of his, the Princesse de Chimay, daughter of the Duc de Fitzjames. The young Marquis Joachim de Montagu was then nineteen, had served in the army of Spain, and belonged to one of the most ancient families of Auvergne.

All the preliminaries were arranged by the families without anything being said upon the subject to the proposed bride, nor probably to the bridegroom either, and when everything was settled it was decided that now nothing was left to do but "to consult the personal inclinations of the young

people," in preparation for which Pauline was informed in one of the usual family councils of her approaching introduction to her *fiancé*.

One wonders what would have happened if the young people had not happened to like each other after all these arrangements ; but it appears to have been taken for granted that they would not be so inconsiderate as to disappoint the expectations of their relations, who had taken so much trouble. They would have felt like an Italian lady of our own time, who, in reply to the question of an English friend as to what would happen should a young girl of her family not like the husband selected for her, exclaimed in a tone of horror—

"Not like the husband her grandmamma has chosen !"

Her elder sisters, who knew all about it, were much amused at the embarrassment of Pauline when this announcement was made to her. Completely taken by surprise, she did not like even to ask questions about the Marquis de Montagu, but her mother reassured her, told her everything she wished to know, and said that the young man and his father were coming to dine next day.

Accordingly at seven o'clock the Duc and Duchesse d'Ayen were seated in their *salon* with Pauline and Rosalie, dressed alike in blue and white satin ; Pauline, who had not slept all night, very pale and dreadfully frightened, especially when the sound of a carriage was heard in the courtyard, and a few minutes afterwards M. le Vicomte de Beaune and M. le Marquis de Montagu were announced.

Neither of the young people dared speak to or

look at the other, but at last M. de Beaune¹ got up to be shown a portrait of Washington by de Noailles and La Fayette, who were present, and she took the opportunity of looking at him. He was not handsome, but had an attractive face, and at the end of the evening she told her mother that she was quite willing to marry him.²

The wedding took place in the spring of 1783, before her seventeenth birthday. The presents and *corbeille* were magnificent, and every day, between the signing of the contract and the marriage, Pauline, in a splendid and always a different dress, received the visits of ceremony usual on these occasions. As her family and her husband's were related to or connected with every one of the highest rank in France, all the society of Paris passed through the *hôtel de Noailles* on those interminable evenings, which began at six o'clock and ended with a great supper, while Pauline sat by her mother, and was presented to every one who came.

The young Marquis and Marquise de Montagu remained for two days at the *hôtel de Noailles* after the marriage had been celebrated at St. Roch, and then Pauline, with many tears, got into the splendid blue and gold *berline* which was waiting for her, and drove to the *hôtel Montagu*, where her father-in-law met her at the foot of the great staircase, and conducted her to the charming rooms prepared for her.

¹ By a family arrangement the father was called Vicomte de Beaune.

² Anne-Paule-Dominique de Noailles, Marquise de Montagu.

CHAPTER IV

The Marquis de Montagu rejoins his regiment—Life of Pauline at the *hôtel de Montagu*—Affection of her father-in-law—Brilliant society—Story of M. de Continges—Death of Pauline's child—Marriage of Rosalie to Marquis de Grammont—Birth of Pauline's daughters—The court of Louis XVI.—The Royal Family—Dissensions at court—Madame Sophie and the Storm—Extravagance of the Queen and Comte d'Artois—The Comte d'Artois and Mlle. Duthé—Scene with the King—*Le petit Trianon*—The Palace of Marly—A sinister guest.

AT the end of seven weeks her husband went back to rejoin his regiment, and Pauline was left with her father-in-law and her new aunt, Mme. de Bouzolz, a very young, lively woman, whose husband had also just returned to the army. Both were very kind and fond of her, but their ideas were not so strict as those of the Duchesse d'Ayen.

Mme. de Bouzolz delighted in novels, balls, and all the amusements natural to her age; was affectionate, good-hearted, rather thoughtless, but with no harm in her. She soon became devoted to Pauline, and fell a great deal under her influence.

M. de Beaune was an excellent man, rather hasty-tempered, but generous, honourable, delighted with his daughter-in-law, and most kind and indulgent to her. He took the deepest interest in her health, her

dress, and her success in society, into which he constantly went, always insisting upon her accompanying him.

And society was very fascinating just then : all the stately charm and grace of the old *régime* mingled with the interest and excitement of the new.

Pauline never cared much for society, and her tastes were not sufficiently intellectual to enable her to take much part in the brilliant conversation or to enter with enthusiasm into the political ideas and principles discussed at the various houses to which she went with Mme. de Bouzolz, who did not trouble herself about philosophy or "ideas"; and M. de Beaune, who was a strong Conservative, and held revolutionary notions in abhorrence.

They frequented the society of the Queen, went to balls, theatricals, and to suppers given by the *esprits forts*, such as the Maréchale de Luxembourg, the old Duchesse de la Vallière, a great friend of M. de Beaune, who was a Noailles, and a contemporary of Louis XIV.¹; also of the Maréchale de Mirepoix, a leading member of society.

An amusing anecdote is related by Mme. de Bassanville² concerning the marriage of a certain Mlle. de Mirepoix, who belonged to that family, but apparently to a younger and poorer branch of it.

The Marquis de Continges, a dissipated *roué* of the court of Louis XV., an encyclopædist and friend of Voltaire, finding in the reign of Louis XVI. that he was getting old, thought he would marry. He

¹ She died May 11, 1784, at the age of ninety-nine years, seven months, and six days.

² "Salons d'Autrefois."

was noble, rich, and a good *parti*; but after making many inquiries he could not hear of any one he especially fancied. One evening he appeared at a great party given by the Princesse de Lamballe, at which every one of importance was present, dressed in black velvet, with lace ruffles, a sword by his side, and in his hand an embroidered hat full of mysterious tickets.

"What is that, M. le Marquis?" asked his hostess.

"I have come to consult Destiny in your temple, Madame, if your Highness permits," said he with a bow.

"Have you found means to conciliate her?" asked the Princess amidst the laughter aroused by this speech.

"I hope so, Madame. In my hat are *100,000 livres de rente*, a Marquisate, and a dowry, besides my heart and my hand. Thus I put myself into a lottery: here is a heap of tickets of which only one is black, the winning one. So let all the young ladies who wish to marry come and choose one."

All the young girls, laughing and treating it as a capital joke, crowded round to draw. One of the last drew the black; it was Mlle. de Mirepoix, a dark, handsome girl of five-and-twenty, who was poor and had not yet found a husband.

"Mademoiselle," said the Marquis, "what you have won there is myself, your very humble servant, who, if you will allow him, will become your husband. I put myself into my hat, with all my fortune; accept both, for they are yours."

Mlle. de Mirepoix thought at first that he was

joking, but finding the transaction was serious, fainted with joy. They were married and belonged to the Queen's intimate circle, but the union did not turn out any more happily than might have been expected. Soon the Revolution swept all away; they emigrated, but not together; he went to Germany, she to England. When afterwards he came to London, his wife went to Italy.

Pauline went out a great deal, more as a duty than a pleasure. What she really cared for most were the interviews with her mother twice a week, and the time she snatched to be with her sisters when she could.

When Mme. de Bouzolz had a baby, she nursed her devotedly, and took the deepest interest in the child. But the height of bliss seemed to be attained when soon after she had a daughter herself, with which she was so enraptured and about which she made such a fuss, that one can well imagine how tiresome it must have been for the rest of the family. She thought of nothing else, would go nowhere, except to the wedding of her sister, Mme. du Roure, with M. de Thésan; and when in the following spring the poor little thing died after a short illness, she fell into a state of grief and despair which alarmed the whole family, who found it impossible to comfort her. She would sit by the empty cradle, crying, and making drawings in pastel of the child from memory after its portrait had been put away out of her sight. But her unceasing depression and lamentation so worried M. de Beaune that, seeing this, she left off talking about it, and he, hoping she was becoming

more resigned to the loss, proposed that she should begin again to go into society after more than a year of retirement. She consented, to please him, for as he would not leave her his life was, of course, very dull. But the effort and strain of it made her so ill that the next year she was obliged to go to Bagnères de Luchon. M. de Beaune, who was certainly a devoted father-in-law, went with her. Her mother and eldest sister came to visit her there ; her husband travelled three hundred leagues, although he was ill at the time, to see how she was getting on, and in the autumn she was much better, and able to go to the wedding of her favourite sister, Rosalie, with the Marquis de Grammont.

In 1786-8 she had two daughters, Noémi and Clotilde, soon after whose birth the family had to mourn the loss of Mme. de Thésan, who died before she was five-and-twenty, and who was certainly, as events soon proved, taken away from the evil to come.

The same may be said of Pauline's young aunt, Mme. de Bouzolz, who died the same year.

M. de Montagu, remembering his wife's proceedings with the former baby, insisted upon the others being brought up in the country, and Pauline again went out with her father-in-law, receiving a great deal of admiration which delighted him, but about which she cared very little. She was very pretty, considered very like what the Duchess, her mother, had been at her age, and perfectly at her ease in society, even when very young, and timid with her new relations ; not being the least nervous

during her presentation at Versailles, which was rather a trying and imposing ceremony.

People were presented first to the King, then to the Queen, in different *salons*; of course magnificently dressed. The King, now that he was Louis XVI., very often did not speak but always made a friendly, gracious gesture, and kissed the lady presented, on one cheek only if she was a simple *femme de qualité*; on both if she was a duchess or *grande d'Espagne*, or bore the name of one of the families who possessed the hereditary right to the honours of the Louvre and the title of cousin of the King.

Soon after his accession the young Marquise de Pracontal, who was very pretty, very *dévoté*, and very timid, was presented to Louis XVI., who kissed her with such fervour on one cheek that she was dreadfully embarrassed and frightened; and was just going to kiss her other cheek, when the Duc d'Aumont threw himself between them, exclaiming in consternation that she was not a duchess.

When presented to the Queen it was customary to bow low enough to appear to kneel in order to take up the edge of her dress, but her Majesty never allowed that to be carried to the lips of the lady presented, but let it fall with a slight movement of her fan, which Marie Antoinette always executed with singular grace. A duchess or *grande d'Espagne* then seated herself before the Queen, but only for a moment, a privilege known as the *tabouret*. After retiring, of course backwards, with a mantle the train of which had to be eight ells on the ground,

people went to be presented to all the other princes and princesses of the royal family.

It consisted, at the death of Louis XV., of the King, aged nineteen; the Queen, eighteen; the Comte de Provence, eighteen; the Comtesse de Provence, twenty; the Comte d'Artois, seventeen; and the Comtesse d'Artois, eighteen. Of Mesdames Adélaïde, Victoire, Sophie, and Louise, the last of whom was a Carmelite nun, and whose ages were from thirty-eight to forty-three.

Mesdames de France were in many respects excellent women: religious, charitable to the poor, strict in their duties. The three elder ones had stayed by their father in his fatal illness, by which Adélaïde and Sophie had caught the small-pox. Louise was a saintly person; and all of them were devoted to their family and friends. But they were narrow-minded, obstinate, and prejudiced to an extraordinary degree, and they allowed their hatred of the house of Austria to include their niece, the young Queen; their unjust animosity against whom was the cause of incalculable mischief.

From her first arrival they set themselves against the Dauphine, they exaggerated the faults and follies which were only those of a thoughtless, wilful child of fifteen, and by their unjustifiable spite gave colour to the infamous and false reports circulated by her enemies. They tried to sow dissension between her and the Comtesse de Provence, hoping by means of his wife to engage their second nephew in a party against her. The fault was chiefly that of Madame Adélaïde, for Madame Victoire was far

more gentle and easygoing, and Madame Sophie so dreadfully shy and nervous that she was incapable of taking a leading part in anything.

She was so terribly frightened at a thunderstorm that once when visiting the Comte and Comtesse de Provence, as she stayed rather long and they wanted to go out, the Count had some heavy thing rolled on the floor of the room above, which she took for distant thunder and hurried away to reach home before the storm.

The young princes and princesses, however, in spite of the disputes, jealousies, and quarrels that occurred amongst them, agreed in amusing themselves very well together. They gave balls, theatricals and *fêtes* of all kinds ; the Queen was very fond of cards, and gambling went on to an extent which, with the money spent on *fêtes* and in other still more reprehensible ways, especially by the Comte d'Artois, though it could have passed as a matter of course under former reigns, now increased the irritation and discontent which every year grew stronger and more dangerous. For the distress amongst the lower orders was terrible ; for years marriages and the birthrate had been decreasing in an alarming manner ; the peasants declaring that it was no use bringing into the world children to be as miserable as themselves.

The young princes and princesses could not understand that the resources of the State were not inexhaustible, or that they might not draw whatever they liked from the Treasury when they had spent all their own allowances.

The Comte d'Artois had an affair with Mlle.

Duthé, who had ruined numbers of people, and thought her *liaison* with a *fils de France* would open the Treasury to her rapacity. She contracted enormous debts at all the great shops in Paris, and very soon bills for plate, pictures, jewels, furniture, dresses, &c., &c., poured in upon the Prince, who, finding himself utterly unable to pay them, sent for Turgot, then *Contrôleur-Général*, and asked him to get him out of the difficulty.

Turgot replied coldly that as the money in the treasury did not belong to him, he could not dispose of it without the King's permission.

The Comte d'Artois flew into a passion with Turgot, who went to the King and laid the matter before him.

Louis XVI., the only one of the family who saw the necessity of order and economy, was furious, and declared that the treasury of the State should not be squandered to satisfy the fancies of a prostitute, that the Comte d'Artois must manage as he could, that he forbade Turgot to give him the money, and that the Comte d'Artois was to be sent to him at once.

The whole affair was an exact specimen of the mingled extravagance, folly, vice, and weakness which were leading to the terrible retribution so swiftly approaching.

There was a violent scene between the two brothers, the Comte d'Artois threatened to borrow the money he could not extort, and the King, after reproaching him for his conduct, ordered him to his own apartment, intending to punish him by means of a *lettre de cachet*. But then, as always,



Nattier

MADAME SOPHIE

To face page 203

the irresolution and weakness of Louis XVI. more than counterbalanced his good intentions.

The Comte d'Artois appealed to the Queen and the Comte de Provence, who went to intercede for him with the King. Louis, irritated by the vehemence with which Marie Antoinette took the part of the Comte d'Artois, asked her whether she knew what he wanted the money for, and on her replying that she did not, proceeded to tell her. The Queen looked thunderstruck, gave way to a torrent of indignation against the conduct of the Comte d'Artois, and left the room. But Louis, instead of abiding by the decision he had so vehemently announced, allowed himself to be persuaded by the Comte de Provence and his aunts to revoke everything he had said, and do everything he had inveighed against. The Comte d'Artois was not punished and the disgraceful debts were paid.

The King had given *le petit Trianon* to the Queen, who delighted in the absence of restraint and formality with which she could amuse herself there, and if she had been satisfied with the suppers and picnics with her family and friends in the little palace and its shady gardens, it would have been better for her and for every one. But she gave *fêtes* so costly that the King on one occasion, hearing that he was to be invited to one that was to cost 100,000 francs, refused to go, and on the Queen, much hurt at his decision, assuring him that it would only cost a mere trifle, he told her to get the estimates and look at them. However, as usual, he was persuaded to yield and be present at the *fête*.

Then the Comte d'Artois insisted on having a

place of the same kind, and on its being made and finished in a week ; which at enormous expense he succeeded in accomplishing, besides winning from the Queen a bet of 100,000 francs made upon the subject.

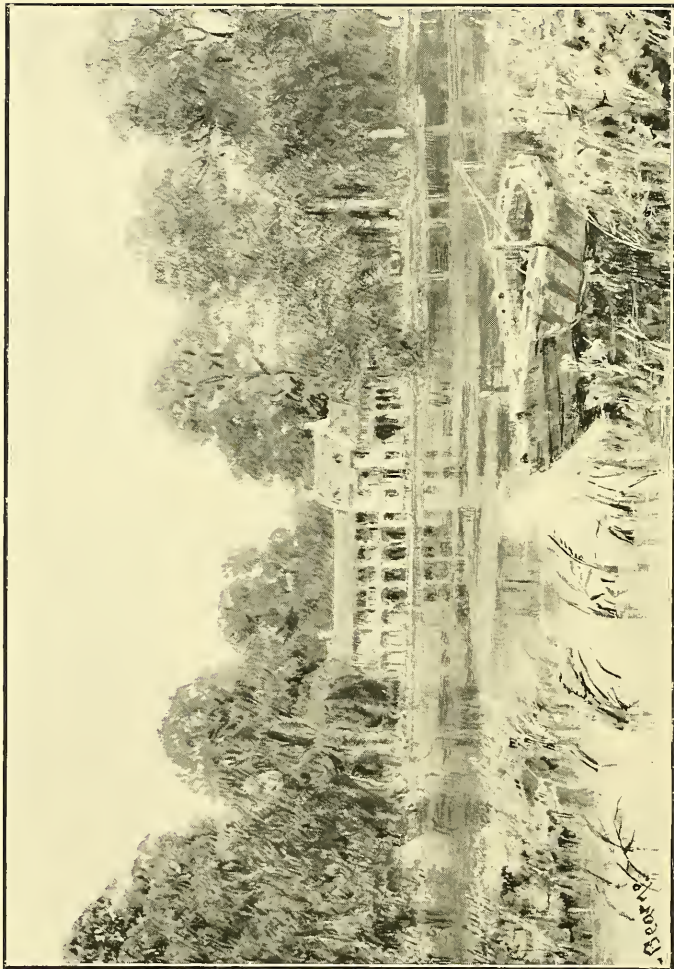
The Comte d'Artois did not hesitate to give 1,700 louis for a race horse, or to lose four or five hundred thousand francs in an evening at cards ; and the Emperor Joseph II., when under the name of Count von Falkenstein he paid the celebrated visit to France and his sister, wherein he made himself so disagreeable and gave so much offence, was well justified in the contemptuous sarcasm with which he spoke of the squandering of the revenues in racing and gambling.

It was, perhaps, worst of all at Marly, beautiful Marly, so soon to be utterly swept away ; for there such was the relaxation of etiquette that any decently-dressed person might enter the *salon* and join in the play, with the permission of the ladies of high rank to whom they gave part of their winnings. People came there in crowds, and on one occasion the Comte de Tavannes, coming up with a look of consternation to the Comte de Provence, whispered—

“Ah ! Monseigneur ! What an indignity ! Do you see that man near that *console* ? a man in a pink coat with a waistcoat of blue and silver, wearing spectacles ?”

“Yes ; and there is nothing in his appearance to justify your horror.”

“You don't know who the person is, Monseigneur, or your hair would stand on end.”



E. H. Buerne

LE PETIT TRIANON

“Can it be the ——”

“The executioner? You have guessed it, Monseigneur, and that fearful name explains the state of mind in which you see me.”

“Do not say a word to any one,” said the Prince. “I will undertake to turn out the insolent fellow without making a scandal, unless you will do it yourself.”

Tavannes drew back, and just then, seeing Prince Maurice de Montbarrey, Colonel of the *Cent-Suisses* of his guard, the Comte de Provence sent him to tell the man to go. Saint-Maurice obeyed, without knowing who the man was, and the Comte de Provence saw him turn pale and cast a terrible look at Saint-Maurice. He retired in silence, and not many years afterwards Saint-Maurice fell under his hand.

CHAPTER V

Weak character of Louis XVI.—Quarrels at Court—Mme. de Tessé—Forebodings of Mme. d'Ayen—La Fayette—Saintly lives of Pauline and her sisters—Approach of the Revolution—The States-General—Folly of Louis XVI.—Scenes at Versailles—Family political quarrels—Royalist and Radical—Death of Pauline's youngest child.

THERE was a striking contrast between the position of Louis XVI. and that of his predecessors on the throne of France.

Everybody was afraid of Louis XIV., and even of Louis XV. At any rate, they ruled. They commanded, and their subjects obeyed.

But nobody was afraid of Louis XVI., and when he did command he was by no means sure of obedience. He had ascended the throne with the most excellent intentions, abolished all sorts of abuses, and wanted to be the father of his people. But a father who cannot be respected is very likely not to be loved, and a ruler who cannot inspire fear cannot inspire respect either, and is not so fit to be a leader as one who possesses fewer virtues and more strength and courage.

When Louis XV. remarked that it was a pity the Comte de Provence was not the eldest of his grandsons, that he knew what he was saying is evident

from the fact that though all three of them inherited the crown, the Comte de Provence was the only one who succeeded in keeping it.

Louis XVI. was the most unsuitable person to rule over the French, a nation more than any other alive to, and abhorrent of, any suspicion of ridicule or contempt. And to them the virtues and faults of Louis were alike ridiculous. When he interfered in the love affairs of the Prince de Condé, and ordered the Princesse de Monaco to retire into a convent, the Prince de Condé became his enemy, and people laughed. When he spent hours and hours shut up alone making keys and locks they shrugged their shoulders, and asked if that was a diversion for the descendant of Henri IV. and Louis le Grand.

Besides the conflict between the new and old ideas, the extravagant hopes of some and the natural misgivings of others, the court was disturbed by the quarrels and jealousies of many of the great nobles who, not contented with occupying the posts they held, aimed at making them hereditary in their families.

The Marquis de Noailles was one of the gentlemen of the household of the Comte de Provence, who did not much like the Noailles, and said that the Marquis was a true member of that family, eager after his own interests and those of his relations. Even the saintly Duchesse de Lesparre, when she resigned her place of *dame d'atours* to the Comtesse de Provence, was much aggrieved that the latter would not appoint another Noailles, but chose to give the post to the Comtesse de Balbi, a personal friend of her own.

The Maréchale de Mouchy was furious because the Queen had created or revived an office which she said lessened the importance and dignity of the one she held, and after much fuss and disturbance she resigned her appointment. All the Noailles took her part and went over to the opposition. Although the riches, power, and prestige of that family were undiminished, they were not nearly so much the favourites of the present royal family as they had been of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., which was natural, as they were so much mixed up with the ultra-Liberals, whose ranks had been joined by so many of their nearest relations.

Mme. de Tessé, younger sister of the Duc d'Ayen, was well known for her opinions. La Fayette, de Noailles, and de Ségur had returned from America, and their ideas were shared by Rosalie's husband, de Grammont, and to a certain extent, though with much more moderation, by M. de Montagu. All the remaining daughters of the Duc d'Ayen except Pauline shared the opinions of their husbands; M. de Thésan and M. de Beaune were opposed to them, as was also the Duchesse d'Ayen, whose affection for her sons-in-law did not make her share their blind enthusiasm and unfortunate credulity.

Inheriting the cool head, calm judgment, and commonsense of her father and grandfather, she did not believe in these extravagant dreams of universal happiness and prosperity. On the contrary, her mind was filled with gloomy forebodings, and during a severe illness that she had, she called her daughters round her bed and spoke to them of

her fears for the future with a sadness and earnestness only too prophetic, and with which Pauline was more strongly impressed than her sisters.

Adrienne especially believed implicitly in her husband, who was now the supreme fashion amongst the Liberals, *fêted*, flattered by high and low, and just at this time the idol of the people; a popularity which soon gave place to hatred, and which did no good while it lasted.

For La Fayette was neither a genius, nor a great man, nor a born leader; the gift of influencing other people was not his; he had no lasting power over the minds of others, and as to the mob, he led them as long as he went where they wanted to go. When he did not agree with all their excesses they followed him no longer.

A man full of good qualities, brave, disinterested, honourable, a good husband, father, and friend, full of enthusiastic plans and aspirations for the regeneration of society and the improvement of everybody, La Fayette was a failure. He did more harm than good, for, like many other would-be popular leaders, he had gifts and capacity enough to excite and arouse the passions of the populace, but not to guide or control them.

He was, in fact, a visionary, credulous enthusiast, with an overweening vanity and belief in his own importance; obstinate and self-confident to a degree that prevented his ever seeing the fallacy of his views. His own conceit, and the flattery and adulation of his family and friends, made him think that he, and no other, was the man to save and direct France. His very virtues and attrac-

tions were mischievous in converting others to his unpractical and dangerous views.

His Utopian government and state of society would have been all very well if they had been attainable, but he had no knowledge or comprehension of the instruments and materials of which they were to be composed, no insight into character, no correctness of judgment, no decision or promptitude in emergencies, and what he did or helped to do was that most dangerous of proceedings, to set in motion a force he could not control.

In spite of all their engagements, Pauline and her sisters found time for an immense amount of charitable work of all sorts. They all took an active part in one way or another, and Pauline even managed to make use of the evenings she spent in society, for she collected money at the houses to which she went to help the poor during the hard winters. During that of 1788 she got a thousand *écus* in this way. M. de Beaune used to give her a *louis* every time he won at cards, which was, or he good-naturedly pretended to be, very often.

She and Mme. de la Fayette used also to visit the prisons, which in those days required no little courage, owing to the squalor, cruelty, and misery with which they were thus brought into contact.

Pauline also had something like what would now be called by us a district at Montmartre, not far from the *rue Chantereine*, where she lived; but she had poor pensioners all over Paris to whom she gave food, firing, clothes, doctors, everything

they wanted, and whom she visited constantly. Old and young, good and bad, beggars, prisoners, every sort of distress found a helper in her.

But neither her children nor her charitable and religious duties, absorbing as they were to her, could exclude her from intense excitement and interest in the political events going on around her. The questions discussed were so vital, and the changes so sweeping, that every phase of life was affected by them.

The provincial assemblies were sitting all over France in 1787-8 in preparation for the States-General which were soon to be summoned with such fatal results. The Duc d'Ayen was president of the assembly of Limousin, M. de Beaune of that of Auvergne ; nearly all the men of her family sat in one or the other, and were eager for the reforms which, if they could have been properly carried out and had satisfied the nation, would have indeed been the beginning of a new era of prosperity and happiness.

The abolition of *lettres de cachet*, liberty of the press, the strict administration of justice, the equalisation of taxation, the abolition of the oppressive privileges of the nobles ; all these and others of the kind were hailed with acclamations by the generous, enthusiastic young nobles who imagined that they could regenerate and elevate to their lofty ideals the fierce, ignorant, unruly populace who were thirsting, not for reform and good government, but for plunder and bloodshed.

Never in the world's history was a stranger mingling of generosity and folly, unpractical learn-

ing and brutal ignorance, misguided talents and well-meaning stupidity, saintly goodness and diabolical wickedness, heroic deeds and horrible crimes, than in the years ushered in with such triumph and joy by the credulous persons so truly described in later years by Napoleon: "Political economists are nothing but visionaries who dream of plans of finance when they are not fit to be schoolmasters in the smallest village. . . . Your speculators trace their Utopian schemes upon paper, fools read and believe them, every one babbles about universal happiness, and presently the people have not bread to eat. Then comes a revolution. . . . Necker was the cause of the saturnalia that devastated France. It was he who overturned the monarchy, and brought Louis XVI. to the scaffold. . . . Robespierre himself, Danton, and Marat have done less mischief to France than M. Necker. It was he who brought about the Revolution."

The party who, like the more sensible and moderate reformers, wished only for the abolition of abuses, and for such considerable reforms in the government and laws as should give freedom and gradual prosperity to the whole nation, without destroying or plundering one class for the benefit of another, vainly imagined that they would establish a constitution like that which in England had been the growth of centuries, in a few days or weeks, amongst a people totally different in every characteristic, quite unaccustomed to freedom, self-government, or calm deliberation, and exasperated by generations of tyranny.

What they wanted was a free and just government under a constitutional king, but they failed to realise that their party was far too small and too weak to have any chance of carrying out their plans, and that behind them was the savage, ignorant, blood-thirsty multitude with nothing but contempt and derision for their well-intentioned projects of reform and law and just government, pressing onwards to the reign of anarchy and devastation which they themselves were doing everything to help them to attain.

The States-General were to open on May 5th, and the day before M. de Beaune and M. de Montagu went to Versailles to be present, Pauline remaining in Paris to nurse a sick servant.

Those who had dreaded the summoning of the States-General at a time when the public were in so inflamed and critical a state, were soon confirmed in their opinions by the disputes between the three orders, and the general ferment. Disloyal demonstrations were made, the King sent for more troops and dismissed Necker, who, like La Fayette, was unable to quell the storm he had raised ; everything was becoming more and more alarming. Just before the fall of the Bastille, Pauline, who was not well at the time, was sent to Bagnères again, where, after stopping at Toulouse to see her little orphan niece Jenny de Thésan, she arrived so dangerously ill that she thought she was going to die, and wrote a touching letter to her sister Rosalie, desiring that her children might be brought up by Mme. de Noailles, but commending them to the care of all her sisters.

Her illness was of course aggravated by the accounts from Paris, and she heard with dismay that La Fayette had been made commander of the *garde-nationale*, which she dreaded to see him leading against the King. He had then reached the height of his power.¹

The Revolution had begun indeed, and was advancing at a fearful rate. The King and Queen, seeing the danger they were all in, at this time thought of escaping from Versailles. The Queen told Mme. de Tourzel to make preparations quietly to start. Had they done so it might probably have saved them all, but the King changed his mind and they stayed.²

The *Chasseurs de Lorraine* and *regiment de Flandre* having been sent to Versailles on account of the crimes and murders daily committed there, the *gardes-du-corps* gave them a splendid banquet in the *Salle de Comédie*, to which all the troops, including the *gardes-nationales*, were invited.

The King, Queen, and Dauphin appeared, and there was an outburst of loyalty in which the *gardes-nationales* joined. The band struck up *Richard o mon roi*; the ladies of the Court who had come into the boxes tore up their handkerchiefs into white cockades, the young officers climbed up into the boxes to get them; the evening finished with a ball, and in a frenzy of loyalty.

Again the King let slip a golden opportunity, for he could have left that night in perfect safety with a strong escort, and placed himself and the royal

¹ "Mémoires de Marquise de Montagu."

² "Mémoires de Mme. de Tourzel."

family in safety, if only he had taken advantage of the favourable disposition of the troops, but the chance was lost, the demonstration infuriated and alarmed the Revolutionists, who succeeded in corrupting part of the *regiment de Flandre*, made La Fayette head of the National Guards, and carried the King and royal family to Paris.

Even then they had a third chance of escape, for when the announcement of what was intended arrived, the King was out hunting, the horses were just being put into the carriage of the Dauphin who was going out for a drive, and if the Queen, her children, and Madame Elisabeth had got into the carriage and joined him, they could have fled together. But the idea did not occur to them; they waited till the King returned, and were taken prisoners to Paris next day, escorted by La Fayette, who, though able to protect them from personal violence, was powerless to prevent the horrors and crimes committed by his atrocious followers.

The King would not even try to defend himself or those belonging to him. Narbonne Fritzlard begged him to let him have troops and guns with which he would soon scatter the brigands, who could only pass by Meudon and the bridges of Sèvres and St. Cloud. "Then, from the heights I will cannonade them and pursue them with cavalry, not one shall reach Paris again," said the gallant soldier, who even then would have saved the miserable King in spite of himself.¹

But Louis refused, and when the ruffians surrounded the *château*, forbade them to be fired on,

¹ "Mémoires de Mme. de Tourzel."

which order, when they heard, they began to massacre the *gardes-du-corps*, who were not allowed to defend themselves !

In reading the history of these events one cannot help feeling that all one's sympathy is for Marie Antoinette and her children, but that a King whose conduct was so despicable, who shrank from shedding the blood of infamous traitors and murderers, while he allowed them to massacre his faithful soldiers and friends, was not worth dying for.

When it was too late he ordered a carriage and tried to leave, but was stopped by the *gardes-nationales* and servants. La Fayette on his white horse rode with the cavalcade, full of uneasiness, for he saw that he could not control the followers with whom he had imagined himself to be all-powerful, their crimes and cruelties were abhorrent to him, and the fearful position of the King and royal family alarmed and distressed him.

The royalists were just now all the more bitter against La Fayette, as he was supposed to have been partly the cause of the death of M. de Favras, who was engaged in a plot for the liberation of the King, which was unfortunately discovered. The King and Queen tried in vain to save him ; he was condemned and put to death.

Mme. de Tourzel asserts that La Fayette helped to irritate the mob against him, and that he was afraid of de Favras' intrigues against himself, as he was accused of plotting to murder Necker, Bailly, and La Fayette.

Pauline recovered from her illness and returned to Paris during the terrible days of October. Every-

thing was changed, the streets were unsafe to walk in, murders were frequent, bands of ruffians went about threatening and insulting every one whom they suspected or disliked. She fetched her two children back to the *rue Chantereine*, and resumed her charitable expeditions, though it was dangerous to walk about.

Society was split into opposing parties, infuriated against each other, quarrels and reproaches took the place of the friendly conversations and diversions of former days. It was not to be wondered at, and her own family once so united was now divided and estranged.

M. de Beaune not only refused to receive or speak to the Vicomte de Noailles and La Fayette, but would scarcely allow Pauline to see her sisters, at any rate in his *hôtel*. When they were announced anywhere he took up his hat and left the house, and the banging of doors in the distance proclaimed his displeasure. It was worse when she was alone with her husband and his father in the evenings. Ever since the fall of the Bastille M. de Beaune had been anxious to emigrate with his family, and Pauline, who shared his opinions, had the same wish. But her husband disapproved of it, and the endless discussions and altercations, in which M. de Beaune was irritated and violent, and his son quiet and respectful though resolute, made her very unhappy.

Not that M. de Montagu shared the opinions of his brothers-in-law, he saw to what they had led. But he thought as many others did and still do, that emigration was a mistake, at any rate for the present,

that precipitation in the matter would irritate moderate men and many who were still undecided, and drive them into the ranks of the Revolutionists, especially if they saw the *émigrés* preparing to return with a foreign army to fight against their countrymen. What he hoped for was a *rapprochement* between the royalists and the moderate constitutional party, who, if united, might still save both the monarchy and the reforms. M. de Beaune laughed at the idea, and events prove him to be right; finally, as he could not convince his son, he set off alone.

Pauline remained at Paris with her husband, and in February they lost their younger child, Clotilde. The morning after she died, Pauline, who had been up with her all night, was told that Rosalie, who was living at the *hôtel de Noailles*, had just given birth to her first child.

She dressed, and doing all she could to remove the traces of tears, she prepared, in spite of her husband's remonstrances, to go to her sister, sat with her, talked with apparent cheerfulness, but exhausted by the effort, fell fainting to the ground, when she left her room.

CHAPTER VI

The Château de Plauzet—Varennes—Increasing danger—Decided to emigrate—Triumphal progress of La Fayette—The farewell of the Duchesse d'Ayen—Paris—Rosalie—A last mass—Escape to England.

PAULINE was so ill after this that her husband took her and their remaining child to Aix-les-Bains, and then to their *château* of Plauzat in Auvergne, a curious, picturesque building, part of which dated from the twelfth or thirteenth century, which dominated the little town of the same name, and was surrounded by the most beautiful country.

Hearing that the peasants, still attached to them, and untouched by revolutionary ideas, were about to receive them in the old way, with cross and banner and the ringing of the bells, they thought it better to arrive in the middle of the night, but the first thing in the morning the *château* was surrounded by the people, who were eager to see them.

In this remote and delightful home they decided to stay for the present, and Pauline as usual spent much of her time looking after and helping the peasants, who followed her with their blessings as she went about.

They also made expeditions to several other castles in the neighbourhood, which belonged to the family, amongst others that of Beaune and the ancient castle of Montagu.

Plauzat was a stately and comfortable, besides being a picturesque abode, with its immense hall hung with crimson damask and family portraits, out of which opened Pauline's great bedroom, the walls of which were covered with blue and white tapestry worked by M. de Montagu's grandmother, Laure de Fitzjames, grand-daughter of James II. of England.

The months they spent there were the last of the old life. The vintage went on merrily, the peasants danced before the *château*, little Noémi played with the children, M. de Montagu rode about his farms, meeting and consulting with other owners of neighbouring *châteaux*, and the news from Paris grew worse and worse. The Duc d'Ayen was safe, he had been denounced but had escaped to Switzerland, and was living at Lausanne, where Pauline had been to see him from Aix.

The Comtes de Provence and d'Artois and their wives had got safely over the frontier to Brussels, but the news of the flight and capture of the King, Queen and royal family, came upon them like a thunderbolt. Again it was probable that the fiasco was caused by Louis XVI. Not only had he deferred the flight till it was nearly impossible to accomplish it, but he persisted in their all going together, instead of allowing the party to be divided; if he had consented to which, some of them at least might have been saved. It does not seem really at

all impossible that the Dauphin might have been smuggled out of the kingdom, but their being so many diminished fearfully their chance of escape. Then he kept the carriage waiting for an hour or more when every moment was precious. The whole thing was mismanaged. The time necessary for the journey had been miscalculated. Goguelat went round a longer way with his hussars; they ought to have been at a certain place to meet the royal family, who, when they arrived at the place appointed, found no one. After the arrest at Varennes a message might have been sent to M. Bouillé, who was waiting further on, and would have arrived in time to deliver them. Such, at any rate, was the opinion of persons who had every opportunity of judging of this calamitous failure.¹ Madame Elizabeth, who might have been in security with her sister at the court of Turin, where their aunts had safely arrived, had stayed to share the captivity and death of the King and Queen.

Nothing could be worse or more threatening. Revolutionary orators came down to Plauzat and soon the whole aspect of the place was changed. Peasants who before wanted to harness themselves to draw their carriage, now passed with their hats on singing *Ça ira*. *Châteaux* began to be burnt in the neighbourhood, revolutionary clubs were formed, municipalities and *gardes-nationales* were organised, and although the greater number of

¹ It appears that the catastrophe was chiefly caused by Goguelat first miscalculating the time required for the journey, then not keeping the appointment with his escort; and some said at Varennes he ought to have charged through the small number of people and pushed on to join Bouillé.

their people would not join in them ; cries of "*À la lanterne*" were heard among the hedges and vineyards as they walked out, from those concealed, but as yet fearing to show themselves.

This perilous state of affairs added to a letter Pauline received from her cousin, the Comtesse d'Escars, who had arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle, had seen M. de Beaune there, and heard him speak with bitterness and grief of his son's obstinacy, which he declared was breaking his heart, at length induced him to yield to his father's commands and his wife's entreaties. He consented to emigrate, but stipulated that they should go to England, not to Coblenz, and went to Paris to see what arrangements he could make for that purpose. While he was away La Fayette and his wife passed through the country, receiving an ovation at every village through which they passed. The King had accepted the constitution, and La Fayette had resigned the command of the National Guard and was retiring with his family to his estates at Chavaniac, declaring and thinking that the Revolution was at an end.

How it was possible, amidst the horrors and excesses going on throughout the land, to have such a delusion was incredible to Pauline ; but the credulous infatuation of her husband was shared by Adrienne, who was delighted to get away from public life into the country, and proposed that they should stop with her sister on the way.

But Pauline knew well enough that the Vicomte de Beaune would never tolerate the presence of La Fayette in his house, nor forgive her if she received them there. Having explained this to her

sister, she met her secretly at a little roadside inn where she knew they would stop to change horses.

She found La Fayette as usual very affectionate to her, very much opposed to their emigrating, quite confident in the virtues of the mob, who were burning, robbing, and murdering all over the country, and whose idol he still was.

The interview was short and sad; the sisters promised to write frequently, and parted with many tears. Adrienne proceeding on her triumphal progress to establish herself with her husband and children at Chavaniac, Pauline to wait in loneliness and terror at Plauzat for the return of her husband, making preparations to escape with him and their child at the earliest opportunity. But one unspeakable happiness and comfort was given to Pauline before she went forth into exile. The Duchesse d'Ayen came to stay with her for a fortnight on her way to see Adrienne at Chavaniac.

It was a time never to be forgotten by Pauline; through all the troubled, stormy years of her after life, the peaceful, holy recollections of that solemn intercourse remained deeply impressed upon her.

On those wild autumn days she would sit in the great tapestried room working while her mother read and discoursed to her of the great truths of religion, the power and mercy of God, and the faith and courage which alone could support them amidst the trials and perils gathering around them; of the sufferings and victories of the saints and martyrs; of the swiftly passing trials and shadows of this world, the glory and immortality of the life beyond. And Pauline hung upon her mother's words, for

she knew that they might be the last she would ever hear from that beloved voice, and her courage failed when she tried to tell her of her approaching exile. Mme. d'Ayen would every now and then address her counsels and instructions to the little granddaughter who adored her; and the mother and daughter would unite their prayers amidst the rushing of the tempests or the clamours of the Jacobin club set up close to the *château*. All around was changed and terrible; they thought anxiously of those absent, and looked sadly at the church where they no longer went, as the *curé* was *assermenté*; and as the time drew near for her mother's departure Pauline continually resolved to tell her of her own, but she could never bring herself to do so.

At last the day arrived; the Duchess was to start at ten o'clock. Pauline persuaded her to stay till twelve and breakfast with her. She forced herself to be calm, but all the morning her eyes followed her mother about as she came and went and helped her pack, listening to every sound of her voice, gazing as if to impress her face upon her memory, for she had been seized with a presentiment that she should see her no more. She pretended to eat, but could touch nothing, and then, thankful that her mother did not know of the long separation before them, went down to the carriage with her arm in hers. She held up her child for a last kiss, and then stood watching the carriage as it bore her mother out of her sight for ever in this world.

Then she fled to her own room and gave way

to her grief, and to the forebodings which filled her mind, and still hung over her like a cloud, during the preparations and journey to Paris, where M. de Montagu soon wrote for his wife and child to join him without delay.

On arriving at Paris she found to her great sorrow that her eldest sister was away. Rosalie de Grammont was there but was ill and suffering, expecting her confinement. Pauline wanted to stay with her till it was over, but Rosalie said that emigration was becoming more difficult and dangerous every day, that those who were going had no time to lose, and that she would not hear of Pauline's running any additional risk by delaying her journey for a single day.

It was fixed, therefore, for the 8th of December ; Rosalie helped her sister with all the necessary purchases and packing, so that the servants might not discover where she was going, and, on the morning of the day before their parting, the two sisters went at the break of day through the falling snow to receive the Communion at a secret Oratory, going a long way round for fear their footprints in the snow should betray them. The day was spent in finishing their preparations, and after her child was in bed Pauline wrote her farewell to her mother and eldest sister. The night was far advanced when the letters were finished, and her eyes still bore traces of tears when, before morning dawned, she rose and prepared to start.

Rosalie arrived, her *pelisse* all covered with snow ; the wind raged and it was bitterly cold. Pauline gave her sister the letters for the Duchesse d'Ayen

and Vicomtesse de Noailles, neither of whom she was ever to see again, awoke her child who was astonished to be taken up and dressed by candle-light, and gave her to M. de Montagu, who took her to the carriage, and then came back and, saying "Everything is ready," pressed the hand of his sister-in-law without any further leave taking than if they were going into the country, as the servants were standing about.

Mme. de Grammont wished him "*bon voyage*," and then drew her sister back to the fire for a few last words.

"Are you sure you have forgotten nothing? Have you got your diamonds?"

"No; what is the good? I shall not wear them. We are not going to a *fête*."

"My poor dear, that's all the more reason," said Rosalie. "Of course you must take them."

Pauline understood, fetched her jewel-case, hid it under her cloak, and sending away her two maids, threw herself into her sister's arms. Rosalie clung to her in a passion of tears and sobs, they exchanged a lock of their hair, and Pauline, tearing herself away, hurried to the carriage in which her husband and child were waiting.

They reached Calais on the evening of the day following, and the same night embarked for England.

CHAPTER VII

M. de Montagu returns to Paris—M. de Beaune—Richmond—Death of Noémi—Aix-la-Chapelle—Escape of the Duc d'Ayen and Vicomte de Noailles—La Fayette arrested in Austria—The Hague—Crossing the Meuse—Margate—Richmond—Hardships of poverty—Brussels—Letter from Mme. de Tessé—Joins her in Switzerland—Murder of M. and Mme. de Mouchy—Goes to meet the Duc d'Ayen—He tells her of the murder of her grandmother, Mme. de Noailles, her mother, the Duchesse d'Ayen, and her eldest sister, the Vicomtesse de Noailles—Mme. de la Fayette still in prison.

DIRECTLY M. and Mme. de Montagu got to London they heard of the death of Pauline's aunt, the Duchesse de Lesparre, another grief for her; but really at that time for any one to die peacefully among their own people was a subject of thankfulness to them all.

Pauline, who was very delicate, never took proper care of herself, and was always having dreadful trials, began by being very ill. When she was better they established themselves in a pretty cottage by the Thames at Richmond. But in a short time her husband, who hated emigrating, heard that the property of emigrants was being sequestered, and in spite of his wife's remonstrances, insisted on returning to France, hoping to save his fortune;

and begging his wife to be prepared to rejoin him there if he should send for her when she had regained her strength.

No sooner had he gone than his father arrived unexpectedly from the Rhine, where he had commanded the Auvergne contingent in the army of Condé, composed almost entirely of gentlemen of that province.

His first question was for his son, and Pauline really dared not tell him where he was, but when he asked whether he would be long absent, replied "No." She felt very guilty and unhappy because she was deceiving him; but fortunately he only stayed in London a short time during which he was out day and night; and suddenly he went away on business to another part of England. Meanwhile Pauline thought she would start for France, leaving a letter to M. de Beaune to confess the whole matter.

But just as she was getting ready for the journey her little daughter was taken ill. She recognised with despair the fatal symptoms of her other children. She could not speak English or the doctor French, but Mme. de la Luzerne and her daughter, *émigrées* and friends of the Duchesse d'Ayen, hastened from London, took up their abode at Richmond, stayed with her until after the death of the child, and then took her to London and looked after her with the greatest kindness and affection until M. de Montagu arrived, too late to see his child, distracted with grief and anxiety for his wife, and sickened and horrified with the Revolution and all the cruelties and horrors he had seen.

He now proposed to enter his father's regiment, and Pauline said she would go with them. As they were in great want of money she sold her diamonds, worth more than 40,000 francs, for 22,000, and they went first to Aix-la-Chapelle, where she remained while her husband and his father proceeded to the camp at Coblenz.

Aix-la-Chapelle was crowded with *émigrés*, among whom she found many friends and relations. They met chiefly in the *salon* of her cousin, the Comtesse d'Escars; every one had relations with the army of Condé, in prison, in deadly peril, or even already murdered. The society was chiefly composed of old men, priests and women, whose lives were a perpetual struggle with poverty hitherto unknown to them.

In the ill-furnished, dilapidated *hôtel salon* of Mme. d'Escars Pauline came in the evenings, after a day spent in the poor lodging upon the scanty food she could get, passing her time in reading, in devotion, and in doing what she could to help others.

There she heard continually of the terrible scenes going on in Paris, and incidentally got news of one or other of her family, and now and then she received a letter from one of them with details which filled her with grief and terror.

Her great uncle, the old Maréchal de Mouchy, had never left the King on the terrible day of the 20th of June, but had stood by him making a rampart of his own body to protect him from the hordes of ruffians who were invading the palace; her father, on hearing of these events, had left his refuge in

Switzerland and hurried back to the King ; so did her cousin, the Prince de Poix. Both of them had sympathised with the earlier Liberal ideas at first ; but now, horrified at the fearful development of their principles, they bitterly regretted their folly and came to place their lives at the service of their King.

The Duc d'Ayen spent the terrible night of August 9th in the Tuileries, and both of them followed the King to the Assembly. Even M. de Grammont, who had been strongly infected with the ideas of the time, and even belonged to the National Guard, ran great risk of his life by his support of the King on that day.

As to La Fayette, he had rushed to Paris, violently reproached the Assembly for the attack on the Tuileries, demanded the punishment of the Jacobins, and offered to the King the services which were of no value, and which, as long as they had been of any use, had been at the disposal of his enemies.

Again one remembers the words of Napoleon to the grandson of Necker, who said that his grandfather defended the King—

“Defended the King! A fine defence, truly! You might as well say that if I give a man poison, and then, when he is in the agonies of death, present him with an antidote, I wish to save him. For that is the way your grandfather defended Louis XVI.”

The same remarks apply equally to La Fayette, whom, by the bye, Napoleon could not bear, and would have nothing to do with.

Pauline received a letter from Rosalie, written on the night of August 10th. They had left the *hôtel de Noailles*, which was too dangerous, and were living in concealment. "My father," wrote Rosalie, "only left the King at the threshold of the Assembly, and has returned to us safe and sound . . . but I had no news of M. de Grammont till nine o'clock in the evening. . . . I got a note from my husband telling me he was safe (he had hidden in a chimney). Half an hour later he arrived himself. . . . I hasten to write to you at the close of this terrible day. . . ."

The Duc d'Ayen succeeded in getting away to Switzerland, and the Prince de Poix, who was arrested and being conducted to the Abbaye, contrived to escape on the way, remained hidden in Paris for six months, and then passed over undiscovered to England, where Pauline met him afterwards.

Pauline, who firmly believed in the ultimate success of the royalist army, and whose heart and soul were with the gallant soldiers of Condé and the heroic peasants of La Vendée, waited at Aix-la-Chapelle, studying English and German and corresponding with her mother and sisters under cover of an old servant.

It was a thousand pities that they did not emigrate like the rest, but as they were not actually proscribed, they did not like to leave the old Duke and Duchess de Noailles, who were feeble and dependent on their care.

La Fayette, accused and proscribed by his late admirers, had found himself so unwilling to trust

to their tender mercies that he fled to Liége. But having made himself equally obnoxious to both sides, he had no sooner escaped from the hands of his friends than he fell into those of his enemies, and was arrested by an Austrian patrol and detained, arbitrarily say his friends—but why arbitrarily?—was taken to Wesel, and had now to undergo a mild form of the suffering he had caused to so many others.

The Vicomte de Noailles was also proscribed, and fled to England, whence he kept writing to his wife to join him; but she would not leave her mother and grandmother.

Amongst the *émigrés* themselves there were disputes. Those who had emigrated at first looked down upon the later ones, considering that they had done so, not out of principle, but to save their own lives. They, on the other hand, maintained that if there had been no emigration at all things would never have got to such a pitch. M. de Montagu openly wished he had stayed and been with the royal family during the attack on the Tuileries.

M. de Montagu was now with the troops of the Duc de Bourbon, and hearing he was to pass through Liége, Pauline went there to see him, and waited at an inn to which she knew he would go. Though he was overjoyed at this unexpected meeting, he had to leave the same day, as an engagement was imminent, and he remarked that those who were accused of being the last to join the army must not be last on the battlefield.

Sadly she returned to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the news which she had heard at Liége of the Septem-

ber massacres had already arrived, and where, besides their own horror and grief, the *emigrés* had to listen to the disgust and contempt everywhere expressed by those of other nations for a country in which such atrocities could be perpetuated without the slightest resistance.

At the end of September she heard that Adrienne had been thrown into prison. She trembled for her fate and for that of her mother, Louise, and Rosalie. The campaign ended disastrously for the Royalists, and for days she did not know the fate of her husband and father-in-law. However, M. de Beaune arrived, and a few days later M. de Montagu.

They decided to stay at Aix for the present, and had just taken and furnished a small apartment when they heard the French army, under Dumouriez, was advancing upon Aix.

There was no time to lose; the furniture, &c., was sold at a loss, they packed up in haste, found a carriage with great difficulty, and on a cold, bright day in December they set off, they knew not whither.

The French army had overrun Belgium, everyone was flying towards Holland; the road was encumbered with vehicles of all kinds. Old post-chaises, great family coaches, open carts, were filled with fugitives; many went down the Rhine in boats.

At Cologne Pauline met her cousin, the Comtesse de Brissac, still in mourning for their relation the Duc de Brissac, late Governor of Paris, and Colonel of the *Cent-Suisses*, murdered in the streets of Versailles.

They went down the left bank of the Rhine, passing the fortress of Wesel, where La Fayette was imprisoned. With tearful eyes Pauline gazed from the window of the carriage, but dared not ask to stop. M. de Beaune made no remark and pretended not to notice her agitation ; but he made no objection to the window being wide open in the bitter cold, as he would usually have done.

They were kept a fortnight at the Hague by the storms and shipwrecks going on, but early in January they decided to embark for England. The cold was fearful, and, wrapped in fur cloaks, fur boots and caps, they set off to drive seven or eight leagues perched on the top of open baggage wag-gons, seated upon the boxes, so unsafe that the Baron de Breteuil, who was with them, fell off and put his wrist out.

The Meuse was frozen and must be crossed on foot. Pauline, who was again *enceinte*, managed, leaning upon her husband's arm, slipping and stumbling, to get as far as the island in the middle. M. de Montagu insisted on her being carried the rest of the way by a sailor. M. de Beaune was helped by his only servant, Garden, a tiresome German boy of fifteen. They got to Helvoetsluys after dark, crossed next day, and after about a week found a cottage at Margate with a garden going down to the sea, which they took, and with which they were delighted. It stood between the sea and the country, and near them lived the family of M. Le Rebours, President of the Parliament of Paris, faithful Royalists who were happy enough *all* to have escaped, father, mother, grandparents, six

children, and three old servants. He himself had just then gone to Paris to try to save some of his fortune. They had turned a room into a private chapel where mass was said by an old Abbé; all attended daily, and, needless to say, the prayer for the King was made with special fervour.

The day the fatal news of his death arrived, the Abbé stopped short and, instead of the usual prayer, began the *De Profundis* with a trembling voice. All joined with tears, but when, at the end of it, the old priest was going on to the other prayers, one of the congregation said aloud—

“We have not come to that, Monsieur l'Abbé. The prayer for the King!”

And the loyal subjects joined in supplication for the captive, desolate child who was now Louis XVII.

They were not long left in peace. War was declared with France, and all refugees were ordered to retire inland for greater security.

The two families therefore moved to Richmond, where they found themselves surrounded by old friends.

M. de Beaune was cheerful enough when the day was fine, as he spent his time in visiting them; but when it rained he stayed at home fretting, grumbling, and adding unintentionally to the troubles of those he loved. He took to reading romances aloud to Pauline, who could not bear them, partly, perhaps, from over-strictness, but probably more because in those days, before Sir Walter Scott had elevated and changed the tone of fiction, novels were really as a rule coarse, im-

moral, and, with few exceptions, tabooed by persons of very correct notions. However, she knew M. de Beaune must be amused, so she made no objection.

But her household difficulties were serious. Any persons who have passed their youth in ease and comfort, and then find themselves obliged to arrange their lives upon a totally different scale, will understand this. The petty economies which their soul abhors, the absurd mistakes they continually make, often with disastrous results, the perplexity caused by few and incompetent servants, and the doubt as to whether, after all, their expenses will not exceed their resources, hang like millstones round their inexperienced necks in any case.

But the condition of Pauline, brought up in all the luxury and magnificence of the *hôtel de Noailles*, and suddenly cast adrift in a country the language and habits of which were unknown to her, with very little money and no means of getting more when that was gone, was terrifying indeed. She did not know where anything should be bought, nor what it should cost; money seemed to her to melt in her hands. She consulted her husband, but he could not help her. If she tried to make her own dresses, she only spoilt the material, as one can well imagine. Their three servants, the German boy, a Dutch woman, and after a little while an English nurse, could not understand each other, but managed to quarrel perpetually and keep up the most dreadful chatter. Her child, this time a son, was born on March 30th, Easter Day. She had looked forward to celebrating that festival at

the new church then to be opened, at which many of the young people were to receive their first Communion. Pauline, like all the rest of the French community, had been intensely interested and occupied in the preparations. Flowers were begged from sympathising friends to decorate the altar, white veils and dresses were made for the young girls by their friends, all, even those whose faith had been tainted and whose lives had been irreligious, joining in this touching and solemn festival, which recalled to them their own land, the memories of their childhood, and the recollection of those they had lost.

The first register in the little chapel was of the baptism of Alexandre de Montagu, whose godparents were the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Dondeauville and Mme. Alexandrine de la Luzerne.

At the beginning of August, Pauline, after making up the accounts, told her father-in-law that she had enough money left only to carry on the household for three months longer, but that if they returned to Brussels it would last twice as long, for they could live there much better at half the cost.

So it is in the present day and so it was a hundred years ago ; and the little party set off again on their wanderings. They landed in Belgium just as the Prince of Orange had been beaten near Ypres, the Dutch army was retreating in disorder, the shops were shut, every one was flying, it was impossible to get a carriage, and it was not for many hours that they could get away from Bruges upon a sort of *char-à-banc* with a company of actors, with whom they at last entered Brussels.

Pauline took refuge with Mme. Le Rebours who was just establishing herself there with her family. She found letters from her mother and sister, a month old, telling her of the death of her great aunt, the Comtesse de la Mark, and her grandfather, the Duc de Noailles. Here she also heard of the murder of the Queen, and all these hardships and shocks made her very ill.

When she was better she and M. de Montagu took a small furnished apartment and dined at Mme. Le Rebours', paying pension of 100 francs a month for themselves, the child and nurse. M. de Beaune went to live at a pension set up by the Comtesse de Villeroy, where for a very moderate price he had good food, a good room, and the society of a *salon* in Paris. He grumbled no more, and they were all much more comfortable than in England.

Brussels was crowded with refugees, many of them almost destitute, who sold everything they had, gave lessons in languages, history, mathematics, writing, even riding, but there was so much competition that they got very little.

Still they waited and hoped, as week after week went by. Early in the spring affairs had looked more promising. The coalition against France had formed again under the influence of England. La Vendée and Bretagne had risen, supported by insurrections all over the South of France. Lyon, Toulon, Bordeaux, even Marseilles, and many districts in the southern provinces were furnishing men and arms to join in the struggle. But gradually the armies of the Republic gained upon them, the



Paul Delaroche

MARIE ANTOINETTE

To face page 238

south was a scene of blood and massacre, and the last hopes of the Royalists were quenched with the defeat of the heroic Vendéens at Savenay (December 23, 1793).

Pauline was almost in despair. Her child died, as all the others had done; letters from home had stopped, she did not know what had become of her mother, sisters, and grandmother; they were in the middle of winter and had only enough money for another month; more and more *émigrés* were crowding into Brussels, flying from the Terror, which had begun.

But one day she received a letter from her aunt, Mme. de Tessé, inviting her to come and live with her at Lowernberg in the canton of Fribourg.

Mme. de Tessé had managed to preserve part of her fortune and was comparatively well off. She had more than once suggested that her niece should come to her, but Pauline would not leave her husband and father-in-law as long as she was necessary to them. Now, she saw that it would, as they were in such difficulty, be better to do so. Mme. de Tessé, suspecting that her niece was much worse off than she would tell her, sent her a gold snuff-box that had belonged to Mme. de Maintenon, which she sold for a hundred pounds. M. de Montagu decided to ask for hospitality with his maternal grandfather, the Marquis de la Salle who was living at Constance, and M. de Beaune said he would find himself an abode also on the shores of that lake.

The Marquis de la Salle was more than eighty years old, and had been Lieutenant-General and Governor of Alsace; he was now looked upon with

the utmost deference by all the *émigrés* around. His whole family were with him, except one son, who was with the army of Condé; wife, children, single and married, and grandchildren. They received M. de Montagu with great kindness and affection and wanted also to keep Pauline; but as, though not beggared, they were poor and obliged to economise and work to gain sufficient money for so large a household, she would only stay there a fortnight; then, taking a sorrowful leave of her husband, she went on to her aunt, Mme. de Tessé.

Now Mme. de Tessé was an extremely clever, sensible person, who knew very well how to manage her affairs; and, unlike many of her relations and friends, she did not leave her arrangements and preparations until her life was in imminent danger, and then at a moment's notice fly from the country, abandoning all her property, with no provision for the future, taking nothing but her clothes and jewels.

Having decided that she would have to leave France, she took care to provide herself with securities sufficient to ensure her a fortune large enough to live upon herself, and to help others wherever she went.

She had bought a farm near Morat, which she managed herself, which paid very well, gave her the occupation she required, and supported several helpless people. Her husband, M. de Tessé, *grand d'Espagne de première classe, chevalier des ordres, lieutenant-général des armées du Roi, premier écuyer de la Reine, &c.*, a quiet man, remarkably silent in society; M. de Mun, an old friend, whose wit and conversation she found necessary for her amuse-

ment, and his son, had composed the family before the arrival of her niece ; there were also three old exiled priests whom she supported by the produce of her kitchen garden.

Pauline and her aunt were extremely fond of each other, though their ideas did not agree at all. Mme. de Tessé adored La Fayette, and the deplorable result of his theories from which they were all suffering so severely did not prevent her admiring them.

Pauline went to confession to one of the old priests, and tried in every way to help her aunt, with more good will than knowledge, for when diligently watering the vegetables and flowers she watered the nettles besides, to the great amusement of Mme. de Tessé.

Three weeks after her arrival a letter from London brought the news that the Maréchal de Mouchy and his wife, uncle and aunt of Mme. de Tessé, great-uncle and great-aunt of Pauline, had been guillotined on the 27th of June. For the crime of giving help to some poor priests they were arrested and sent to La Force, whence they were transferred to the Luxembourg where they were the object of universal reverence and sympathy. When, after a time, they were summoned to the Conciergerie, which was the *vestibule* of the tribunal, and was looked upon as the gate of death, the Maréchal begged that no noise might be made as he did not wish Mme. la Maréchal to know of his going, for she had been ill.

"She must come too," was the answer, "she is on the list ; I will go and tell her to come down."

“No,” said the Maréchal, “if she must go I will tell her myself.”

He went to her room and said as he entered—

“Madame, you must come, it is the will of God, let us bow to His commands. You are a Christian, I am going with you, I shall not leave you.”

The news spread through the prison and caused general grief. Some of the prisoners got out of the way because they could not bear to see them pass, but most stood in a double row through which they walked. Amidst the murmurs of respect and sorrow a voice cried out—

“*Courage, Monsieur le Maréchal !*”

“*A quinze ans,*” said the old soldier, firmly, “*j’ai monté à l’assaut pour mon roi ; à près de quatre-vingts ans je monterai à l’échafaud pour mon Dieu.*”

The news fell like a thunderbolt upon the little household. To Pauline it seemed as if this blow were a forecast of another still more terrible. It was long since she had heard anything of her mother, grandmother, and sisters, and she lived in a state of feverish suspense almost impossible to bear.

It was on the 27th of July, 1794, that she started on a journey to see her father, who was living in the Canton de Vaud, near the French frontier. For two nights she had not slept from the terrible presentiments which overwhelmed her. Young de Mun went with her, and having slept at Moudon, they set off again at daybreak for Lausanne. As they approached the end of their journey they were suddenly aware of a *char-à-banc* coming towards

them in a cloud of dust, driven by a man with a green umbrella, who stopped, got down and came up to them. It was the Duc d'Ayen, now Duc de Noailles, but so changed that his daughter scarcely recognised him. At once he asked if she had heard the news, and on seeing her agitation, said hastily with forced calmness that he knew nothing, and told M. de Mun to turn back towards Moudon.

In an agony of terror Pauline sprang out of the carriage and implored him to tell her the worst, for she could bear it.

The Duke put her back in the carriage and sat holding her in his arms; of what passed during their drive she never had a clear recollection, except that in a voice almost inaudible she ventured to ask if Rosalie was still alive, to which her father replied upon his word of honour that he had heard nothing of her. More, she dared not say, frightful visions rose before her eyes, she fancied herself seated upon the tumbril bound with other victims, and the thought was almost a relief to her.

At last they arrived at Moudon, her father led her into a room in the inn, closed the door and began by telling her as gently as possible that he had just lost his mother, the Maréchale de Noailles. He stopped, seeing the deadly paleness of his daughter, who knew by his face that he had not told all.

"And I, father?" she cried, clasping her hands together. He told her that he was not without fear for the fate of the Duchess and even for that of the Vicomtesse de Noailles.

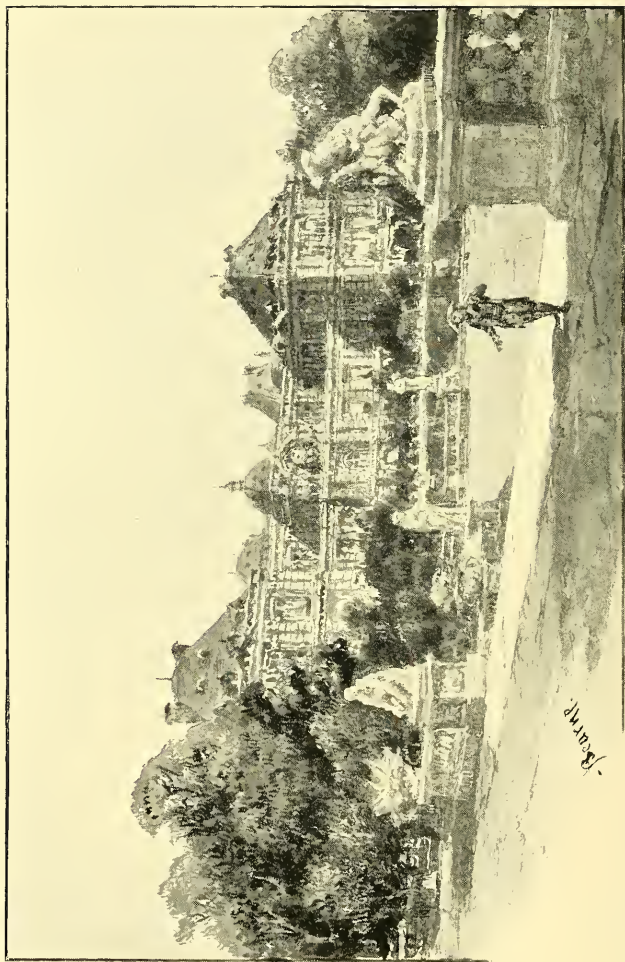
Then she knew that the worst had happened, and with a terrible cry she threw herself into her father's

arms, and with tears and sobs wished she had been in the place of her sister.

The Duke took her back to Lowernberg, where M. de Mun, who had preceded them, had already taken the fatal news to Mme. de Tessé. She received her brother and niece with transports of grief and affection, and did everything she could to comfort them. The list of victims in the paper from Paris contained the names of the Maréchal de Noailles, the Duchesse d'Ayen and the Vicomtesse de Noailles, but it was some time before they could get any details.

After the death of the old Maréchal de Noailles in August, 1793, the Duchesse d'Ayen and her eldest daughter moved to Paris with the Maréchale, who was old and feeble and whose reason, always very eccentric, as will be remembered, was becoming still more impaired. Had it not been for her and their devoted kindness to her, the lives of both the Duchess and her daughter might have been saved. Everything was prepared for the flight of the Vicomtesse to England, where her husband was waiting for her, intending to embark for America. The Duchess would probably have succeeded in making her escape also, but she would not leave her old mother-in-law, and Louise would not leave her.

Rashly they went to Paris in September, 1793, and were soon detained as "suspected" in their own house, where Father Carrichon, a priest, who in disguise carried on the work of his sacred calling, succeeded in visiting them frequently; and from the news he brought them they were before long



E. H. Bearnie

PALAIS DU LUXEMBOURG

convinced that their lives would be sacrificed, and prepared with courage and resignation to meet their death.

As they were talking one day on the subject to Father Carrichon, the Duchess asked him if he would promise to be with them at the foot of the scaffold. He did so, adding that he would wear a dark blue coat and a red carmagnole.

In April, 1794, they were sent to the Luxembourg where they found the de Mouchy, who had been there five months, and who were lodged in a room over the one in which the Maréchale de Mouchy was born. They had also been married at that palace. The three de Noailles were put in the room above them.

There was a great difference amongst the prisons of Paris, and the Luxembourg was perhaps the best, most comfortable, and most aristocratic of all, though the *Convent des Oiseaux*, the *Anglaises*, and *Port Libre*, were also very superior to others.

Amongst many other acquaintances they found the excellent Duchesse d'Orléans, already widow of the infamous *Égalité*, who was very ill and had a wretched bed. Mme. d'Ayen gave her her own which was better and nursed her, while Louise took care of her grandmother night and day, made the beds, and washed the plates and cups.

Twice a week at a certain hour she went on pretence of taking the air to a place from whence she could see her three children, whom their tutor, devoted to her and her family, brought into the garden below. Now and then she received and sent notes to and from him, by one of which they

learnt that Adrienne was in the prison called Plessis, one of the worst.

"God gives me strength," she wrote to him, "and He will support me; I have perfect confidence in Him. Adieu; the feeling for all I owe you will follow me to heaven; do not doubt it. Without you what would become of my children? Adieu, Alexis, Alfred, Euphémie. Let God be in your hearts all the days of your lives. Cling to Him without wavering; pray for your father: do all for his true happiness. Remember your mother, and that her only wish has been to keep you for eternity. I hope to find you again with God, and I give you all my last blessing."

With calmness they received the order to go to the Conciergerie, which was, they knew, their death sentence. When they were sent for, the Duchess, who was reading the "Imitation of Christ," hastily wrote on a scrap of paper, "My children, courage and prayer," put it in the place where she left off, and gave the book to the Duchesse d'Orléans to give to her daughters if her life were spared. As she said their names, for once her calmness gave way. The book was wet with her tears, which left their mark upon it always.

The Conciergerie was crowded, but one of the prisoners, Mme. Laret, gave up her bed to the old Maréchale; Mme. d'Ayen laid herself upon a pallet on the floor, and the Vicomtesse, saying, "What is the use of resting on the eve of eternity?" sat all night reading, by the light of a candle, a New Testament she had borrowed, and saying prayers.

Perfectly calm and undisturbed, she helped her mother dress, remarking—

“Courage, mamma ; we have only an hour more.”

Father Carrichon, warned by M. Grelet the tutor, was ready. As he walked by the car of the victims they recognised him with joy, and a fearful storm that was going on helped to disguise his gestures and proceedings, and when an opportunity offered he turned to them, raised his hand, and pronounced the words of absolution amidst thunder and lightning which scattered the crowd, but did not prevent their hearing him distinctly nor drown their thanks to him and message of farewell to those they loved. “God in His mercy calls us. We shall not forget them ; may we meet in heaven !”

CHAPTER VIII

Illness—Leaves Switzerland with Mme. de Tessé—They settle near Altona—Hears of Rosalie's safety—Life on the farm—Release of Adrienne—Her visit—Farm of Ploen—Peaceful life there—Rosalie and Adrienne—Birth of Pauline's son—He and her other children live—Release of La Fayette—Their visit to Ploen—Meeting of Adrienne, Pauline, and Rosalie at the Hague.

THIS fearful shock brought on so violent an attack of illness that Pauline's friends feared for her reason. Her aunt nursed her with the deepest affection, her husband arrived to comfort her with his love and sympathy, and the anxiety about Rosalie gave her a new object of interest. The Duke went to see the Princesse de Broglie, who had just come to the neighbourhood from France; she knew nothing; but a smuggler was found who knew all the paths of the Jura, and who was willing to go to Franche Comté, promising not to return without knowing the fate of Mme. de Grammont.

The government of Fribourg had begun to annoy Mme. de Tessé about her niece, objecting to her receiving her, and Pauline thought it best to go for a time to Constance. While she was

there the smuggler returned, having discovered Mme. de Grammont, who was safe in Franche Comté, and had with her the children of the Vicomtesse de Noailles and their faithful tutor. She had written to her father and sister on handkerchiefs sewn inside the smuggler's waistcoat, and was thankful to find they were alive; but she could not, as they begged her to do, get out of France just then, as her husband was not sufficiently recovered from an illness to undertake a journey.

Mme. de Tessé, alarmed by the conduct of the government of Fribourg, sold her property there, and resolved to go far north, as the French armies seemed to be spreading all over central and southern Europe.

The little party left Lowemberg at five o'clock one morning before there was much light, except the reflections from the snow upon the mountains; spent a few days at Berne, and went on to Schaffhausen, where M. de Montagu met them, and took his wife to Constance to say goodbye to the La Salle. She stayed four days, and then rejoined her aunt, and went on to Ulm and Nuremberg, where her husband had to leave her, and return to Constance. The rest proceeded to Erfurt, spent a month there among many old friends who had taken refuge in that quiet, ancient town. Finally they crossed the Elbe and arrived at Altona, where in Danish territory they hoped to be able to live in peace and security.

They found a farm, settled themselves in it, and after a time M. de Montagu was added to the house-

hold, for he came to see his wife, and their joy at meeting so touched Mme. de Tessé, that she said he had better stay altogether.

For with care and good management she contrived to live simply, but quite comfortably. Not that farming or life in the depth of the country were at all her fancy; no, what she liked was a town and a *salon* frequented by clever, amusing people of the world whose conversation she could enjoy. But she knew well enough that if she settled in a town and had a *salon*, before very long she would be nearly ruined, whereas at her farm she found no difficulty in supporting herself and those dependent upon her, and helping many others besides.

As to Pauline, she spent her whole time in working for and visiting those unfortunate *émigrés* within reach who were in poverty and distress.

Not far from them she found Mme. Le Rebours, whose husband had persisted in going to France, and had been guillotined. She and her family, amongst whom was the brave, devout spirit, were overjoyed to meet her again.

She was happier now than she had been for a long time; she heard every now and then from her father and Rosalie, her husband was with her, and her love for the aunt, who was their good angel, ever increased. But still the terrible death of her mother, sister, and grandmother cast its shadow over her life, added to which was her uncertainty about Adrienne.

Whatever may be said for or against emigration, one thing is apparent—those who emigrated early

saved not only their lives, but, if they were commonly prudent, part of their property also. Those who emigrated late saved their lives, but lost all their property; while those who remained, or returned, were most likely to lose their liberty, if not their lives.

If the King had taken the opportunity on the night of the banquet at Versailles, gained the coast, and escaped to England, he would have saved himself and his family from misery and destruction, as his brothers did.

In Pauline's family those who, like herself and those about her, got out of the country, were safe from everything but the poverty caused partly by their own improvidence. But of those who remained there was scarcely one who escaped death or the horrors of a revolutionary prison. Only M. and Mme. de Grammont had managed to keep quiet in a distant part of the country, and, of course, at the peril of their lives.

At last a letter came to say that Adrienne was free. She had been the last to be released from Plessis after the death of Robespierre had, to a great extent, stopped the slaughter and opened the prisons. Her captivity had lasted from October, 1793, till February, 1795; and now, very soon after her letter, Adrienne arrived with her two young daughters at Altona.

The two sisters had not met since the interview at the inn during the triumphal progress of the La Fayette. It was a mercy that Pauline had not believed in their Utopia nor taken their advice. Even now Adrienne was only exchanging one

prison for another, for she was shortly going to Austria to obtain leave to share that of La Fayette.

Long and touching were the conversations and confidences of the sisters when they were alone together.

Overcome with emotion at first they looked at each other in silence; then, in a voice broken with sobs, Pauline asked, "Did you see them?"

"I had not that happiness," replied Adrienne.

But she knew all the details of their fate; she had seen M. Grelet and Father Carrichon, who had gone to the scaffold first with their great uncle and aunt, de Mouchy, then with her grandmother, mother, and sister. In the prison of Plessis she had found her cousin, the Duchesse de Duras, daughter of the de Mouchy, and they had consoled each other under the awful calamity that each had undergone. Only a few days more and the Noailles would have been, like their uncle, the Marquis de Noailles, youngest brother of the Duc d'Ayen, saved by the death of Robespierre. The Duchesse de Duras was at once liberated with the rest; but the spite and hatred of Legendre, governor of Plessis, against the very name of La Fayette, caused Adrienne to be detained until the exertions of Mme. de Duras procured her freedom.

She sent her boy to America under the name of Motier, to be brought up under the care of Washington, and then went to Auvergne to see her old aunt, fetch her daughters, and settle her affairs; she had borrowed some money from the Minister of the United States and some diamonds from Rosalie, and had bought back her husband's *château*

of Chavaniac with the help of the aunt who had brought him up, and who remained there.

She met her daughters in a mountain village near Clermont, and the deep, fervent joy of their restoration to each other out of the shadow of death was increased by finding that the priest had just ventured to reopen the village church, where on the next day, Sunday, they again attended mass in that secluded place, and where Virginie, the younger girl, made her first Communion. And she had seen Rosalie, for Mme. de Grammont heard of her sister's release, and resolved to join her. Having very little money, and travelling by public conveyances being still unsafe, taking her diamonds she rode a mule with her three children in paniers, and her husband walking by her side. Thus they journeyed by steep mountain paths, or country lanes, but always by the most secluded ways possible. When they reached Paris, Adrienne was gone, but they resumed their primitive travelling, followed her to Auvergne, and came up with her at the little town of Brionde.

Adrienne had brought Pauline a copy of their mother's will, and, not being an *émigrée*, had taken possession of the castle and estate of Lagrange, left to herself. She only spent a short time at Altona, and started for Austria.

Her farm near the Baltic did not altogether satisfy Mme. de Tessé, and before long they again moved, to be in the neighbourhood of a residence she had heard of, and hoped to get after a time.

It was by the lake of Ploen, and they were obliged to pass the winter at the little town of that name, for it was October when the cavalcade arrived—M. and

Mme. de Tessé, the Montagu, the de Mun, and the priests, to whom another had been added.

There Pauline had a son, and to her great joy he and the children she afterwards had lived to grow up. The farm Mme. de Tessé wished for was called Wittmold, and lay at the other side of the lake upon a plain covered with pasture and ponds, as far as the eye could reach. The house stood on a promontory jutting out into the lake, and was surrounded by fields, apple trees, and pine woods. They crossed the lake in boats, and established themselves there. They could live almost entirely upon the produce of the place, for there was plenty of game, plenty of fish in the lake : the dairy farm paid extremely well, the pasture produced rich, delicious milk ; they had a hundred and twenty cows, and made enormous quantities of butter, which they sold at Hamburg. It was pleasant enough in the summer, but in winter the lake was frozen, the roads covered with snow, and the cold wind from the Baltic raved round the house. However, they were thankful for the shelter of a home that most of their friends would have envied, and they lived peacefully there for four years, during which Pauline organised and carried on a great work of charity which, with the assistance of one or two influential friends, soon spread all over Europe. It was a kind of society with branches in different countries, to collect subscriptions for the relief of the French exiles, and it involved an enormous amount of letter-writing, for, if the subscriptions poured into Wittmold, so did letters of entreaty, appealing for help. But Pauline was indefatigable not only in allotting the different sums of money,

but in finding employment, placing young girls as governesses, selling drawings and needlework, &c.

M. de Beaune paid them one or two visits, and in October, 1797, La Fayette, his wife, and daughters, were released from captivity, and arrived at Wittmold with his two faithful *aides-de-camp*. The brother of one, the Comte de Latour-Maubourg, soon after married Anastasie, his eldest daughter.

Pauline heard the trumpet of the postilion in the little town, and hurried across the lake to meet them. They all crossed in a procession of little boats to the other shore, where Mme. de Tessé was waiting for them.

La Fayette was still an exile. Too *Jacobin* for Austria, too royalist for France, he took a place near Wittmold. The wedding of his eldest daughter took place the following May, and a few days afterwards a daughter was born to Pauline and christened Stéphanie.

Mme. de Tessé, who knew nothing about a sick room, was very anxious and busy, and insisted on helping to nurse Pauline. In spite of her free-thinking professions, she would be observed to make the sign of the cross behind the curtain of the bed. She made various mistakes, and in her haste poured a bottle of eau de Cologne instead of water over the head of the new-born infant.

Georges de la Fayette, now nineteen, came over from America, and arrived at Wittmold, to the delight of the little colony, after his long separation from his family, and his return was the great event of the winter and the delight of his mother.

But the sufferings of the last seven years had

terribly injured Adrienne's health, and it was not till she had a little recovered that La Fayette moved, with all his family, to Viane, a small Dutch town near Utrecht, where they settled for a time to watch the course of events.

It was necessary to settle the succession to the estates of the Duchesse d'Ayen, and it was impossible to arrange this without the meeting of the family. The Vicomte de Noailles was in America, the Marquis de Thésan in Germany, Mme. de Montagu was on the list of *émigrées*, and could not enter France. Her part of the inheritance had been confiscated, but M. Bertémy, the old family lawyer, had bought and transferred it to the rest of the family, to be given her in better times.

It was decided that the three sisters should meet at Viane, where Pauline and her husband went, with post-horses provided by Mme. de Tessé. It was eight years since Pauline and Rosalie had met, and Pauline said it was a foretaste of Heaven.

They all boarded at the La Fayette, but as they were very poor there was very little to eat. They would dine upon *œufs à la neige*, and spend the evening without a fire, wrapped in fur cloaks to keep out the cold of the early spring. M. de Montagu always had declared he had only had one good dinner in Holland, and that was one night when he dined with General Van Ryssel.

Mme. d'Ayen had left property in the department of Seine-et-Marne to the children of the Vicomtesse de Noailles, the estate and castle of Lagrange to Mme. La Fayette, an estate between Lagrange and

Fontenay to the daughter of Mme. de Thésan, the old castle and lands of Fontenay to Mme. de Montagu, and an estate called Tingri to Mme. de Grammont.

But as long as Pauline remained on the list of *émigrées* the affairs could not be wound up.

Before parting, after a month spent together, the three sisters composed a beautiful litany to be said by them in remembrance of their mother, sister, and grandmother. It opened with that sublime passage of scripture beginning with the words, "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God; there shall no torment touch them."

Reluctantly they separated in May, Pauline returning to Wittmold with more luggage than she brought from there, namely, a large box of clothes from America, a present from George de la Fayette to the *émigrés* at Wittmold, and a trunk full of clothes belonging to M. de Beaune, which Mme. de la Fayette had found and brought from Auvergne, and which, though they were somewhat old-fashioned, he was delighted to get.

CHAPTER IX

Return to France—The inheritance of the Duchesse d'Ayen—
Loss of the Noailles property—Inherits the Castle of
Fontenay—Death of Mme. de la Fayette—Prosperous life
at Fontenay—Conclusion.

THE time had now come when the friendly farm at Wittmold, which had sheltered them in adversity, must be given up. The *émigrés* were returning; Mme. de la Fayette and Mme. de Grammont urged their sister to do the same, and Mme. de Tessé was longing to see Paris again.

Mme. de Montagu started first with her husband, leaving her boy with her aunt and her girl with a friend. As they were still on the proscribed list they travelled under the names of M. et Mme. Mongros. They took up their quarters in Paris at a small house kept by an old servant of M. de Thésan, where they found their cousin, the Duchesse de Duras and the Doudeauville, living under their own names, in little rooms very clean, but so scantily furnished that if any visitors arrived they had to borrow chairs from each other.

To walk about Paris was at first most painful to Mme. de Montagu. The sound of carts in the streets made her shudder, the churches were

mostly in ruins or closed. The few that were open were served by *prêtres assermentés*.

Her nephews, Alexis and Alfred de Noailles came to see her, and she went down to Lagrange where the La Fayettees were restoring the *château*, planting and repairing. She soon got her name taken off the proscribed list, then those of her husband, her aunt, her father, her father-in-law, and various other friends, who soon arrived in Paris.

Mme. de Tessé took a house near which Pauline and her husband found an apartment, and their first endeavour was to regain possession of the *hôtel de Noailles*, which had not been sold but was occupied by the Consul Le Brun, who had just left the Tuileries, now inhabited by Napoleon. They did not succeed, however, in getting it back until the Restoration. One day, having to go to the Temple to see one of the young le Rebours, who had come back without permission, was imprisoned there, and whose release she soon procured, Pauline passed through the now deserted corridors and rooms which had been the prison of the royal family. Looking about for any trace of them she found in a cupboard an old blue salad-bowl which had belonged to them, and which she carried away as a precious relic.

The Duc de Noailles, her father, finding he could not recover his *hôtel*, returned philosophically to Switzerland, and bought a house on the Lake of Geneva. He had married the Countess Golówskin, which at first was a grief to his daughters, but after a time they were reconciled to the idea, and got on very well together.

Pauline had another daughter in May, 1801, and after her recovery and a few weeks with Mme. de Grammont and at the baths at Louèche, she went to the district of Vélay with her husband to see if any of the property of his father could be recovered. Their fortunes were, of course, to some extent restored by Pauline's inheritance from her mother, and the fine old *château* of Fontenay[†] made them a charming home for the rest of their lives.

They stopped at Puy, where they found awaiting them at the inn a certain old Dr. Sauzey, who had been born on an estate of M. de Beaune, and cherished a deep attachment for the Montagu family. He still practised in the neighbourhood where he attended the poor for nothing, knew every man, woman, and child for miles round, was beloved by them all, and very influential among them. He knew all the peasants and country people who had bought land belonging to the Montagu family, and had so lectured and persuaded them that numbers now came forward and offered to sell it back at a very moderate price. The good old doctor even advanced the money to pay them at once, and having settled their affairs in Vélay they passed on to Auvergne.

The castles and estates of their family had all passed into the hands of strangers, the Château de Bouzolz was in ruins, so was Plauzat, where all the town came out to meet and welcome them with the greatest affection, and where they succeeded in buying back a good deal of land, but the *château*

[†] Fontenay-Trésigny, province de Brie.

in which they had spent such happy days was uninhabitable.

They went on to Clermont, the capital of the province, where M. de Beaune had a house in the town and a *château* and estate named Le Croc just outside it. They had passed into the hands of strangers, but all the furniture and contents of the *château* had been saved by the faithful *concièrges*, the Monet, who, with the help of their relations and friends, had during the night carried it all away, taking beds to pieces, pulling down curtains and hangings, removing all the wine from the cellars, and hiding safely away the whole of it, which they now restored to its owners.

M. de Beaune, who came later on to take a farewell look at the ruined home of his ancestors, chose part of it to furnish the house he had bought to make his home at Lyons. He also found an old carriage in which he departed to that city. The property of the Maréchal de Noailles, who died in 1793, had all been confiscated and sold, except some remains which were swallowed up by creditors. All that remained was the ruined castle of Noailles, which Pauline would never sell, though after her father had placed it in her hands she was offered two thousand *écus* for it. Mme. de Tessé bought a charming house, which was always filled with her nephews, nieces, and friends, and though again she had plenty of cows, she no longer had occasion to sell the milk. As she grew older her ideas became more devout and her faith stronger, to the great consolation of her nieces, especially of her favourite Pauline.

The first great sorrow was the death of Mme. de la Fayette on Christmas Eve, 1808, at the age of forty-eight. Her health had been completely undermined by the terrible experiences of her imprisonments; and an illness caused by blood-poisoning during her captivity with her husband in Austria, where she was not allowed proper medical attendance, was the climax from which she never really recovered. She died as she had lived, like a saint, at La Grange, surrounded by her broken-hearted husband and family, and by her own request was buried at Picpus, where, chiefly by the exertions of the three sisters, a church had been built close to the now consecrated ground where lay buried their mother, sister, grandmother, with many other victims of the Terror.

The wanderings and perils of Pauline were now at an end. From henceforth her home was with her husband and four children in the old *château* of Fontenay, which they repaired and put in order. It was a fortress built in the reign of Charles VI., and afterwards inhabited and decorated by the Duc d'Epéron. The great tower of the castle still bore his name, and the blue and gold ceiling of his bedroom still remained. It had an immense park and lakes, and a great avenue of chestnut-trees led up to the *château*. The Abbé Cartier, *curé* of Fontenay, was a man after her own heart. He had known her mother, for he came very young to the parish, which he loved with all his heart, and which he had only once left, on the approach of a revolutionary mob. Leaving the *presbytère* with all his own things at their mercy, he hid the cross and all the

properties of the church, and as to the statues of the saints which he could not remove, he painted them all over, turning them into National Guards with swords by their sides. He was only persuaded by his people to escape when already the drums of the approaching ruffians were heard in the village, in which they quickly appeared, and rushed into the church. But they found it empty, except for the statues, with which, in their republican garb, they dared not meddle, so they turned their fury upon the *presbytère*, and when the good Abbé returned he found the church uninjured, but all the contents of his house stolen or destroyed. As far as possible, M. and Mme. de Montagu led the simple patriarchal life they preferred at Fontenay, where they were adored by the people, to whom they devoted their time, money, and attention. Under the trees before the castle stone benches were placed for the peasants who came on Sunday evenings to sit about and dance, and the young people with whom the old *château* was always filled joined eagerly in their festivities.

The harmony and affection that had characterised the daughters of the Duchess d'Ayen were equally conspicuous among her grandchildren, and the numerous relations—sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, and cousins—formed one united family. If there existed differences of opinion, they did not interfere with the affection between those who held them.

The daughter of the Vicomtesse de Noailles was married to the Marquis de Vêrac. Of the sons, Alexis, between whom and Pauline there was an

especially deep affection, and whose principles entirely agreed, refused to accept any employment under the government of Buonaparte. In consequence of the part he took in favour of the Pope he was imprisoned, and only released by the influence of his brother Alfred, an ardent soldier in the Imperial army, who, after distinguishing himself and winning the favour of the Emperor, was killed in the Russian campaign.

Though her winters were generally spent in Paris, Pauline only went out quietly amongst her own friends, not entering at all into the society of the imperial court, which was altogether objectionable to her.

The Restoration was received with rapture by her and most of her family, not even La Fayette himself holding aloof from the welcome to the King.

Alexis de Noailles, who had left France during the reign of Napoleon, entered Paris with the Comte d'Artois; the King and the Duchesse d'Angoulême received with distinguished favour those who had suffered so much in their cause; the Duc de Noailles came from Switzerland and took possession of the *hôtel de Noailles*, just vacated by the Arch-treasurer of the Empire.

But as the size and grandeur of such a residence was no longer suitable to the altered fortunes of its master, he sold it, and only occupied the part called the *petit hôtel de Noailles*, where Mme. de Montagu also had an apartment.

The rest of her life was spent in peace amongst her family, by whom she was adored, in the prac-

tices of charity and devotion, which had always made her happiness.

Mme. de Tessé died in 1813, only a week after the death of her husband, without whom she said that she did not think she could live.

Severe as was her loss to Pauline a more terrible calamity happened to her in 1824, in the death of her only son Attale, who was killed by an accident when out shooting, leaving a young wife and children to her care.

Her daughters [†] all married, and in them her sons-in-law, and grandchildren she found constant interest and happiness: the Duc d'Ayen also, after the death of his second wife, gave up his Swiss house and came to end his days with his favourite daughter at Fontenay.

The death of her husband in 1834 was her last great sorrow, she survived him five years, and died in January, 1839, at the age of seventy-three, surrounded by those she loved best, who were still left her.

She neither feared death nor desired it, her life was spent for others not for herself, she regretted to leave them, but the thought of the other world, and of those who had gone before her, drew her heart towards that radiant, immortal future, the thought of which had ever been her guide and consolation.

Rosalie de Grammont survived her for thirteen years, and died at the age of eighty-five—the last of the five sisters.

[†] Mme. de la Romagère, the Comtesse d'Auberville and the Comtesse du Parc.

III

MADAME TALLIEN

CHAPTER I

Térèzia Cabarrus—Comes to Paris—Married to the Marquis de Fontenay—Revolutionary sympathies—Unpopularity of Royal Family—The wig of M. de Montyon—The Comte d'Artois and his tutor—The Comte de Provence and Louis XV.

AN abyss of separation lies between the two women whose life-histories have just been related, and the one of whose stormy career a sketch is now to be given.

In education, principles, conduct, and nationality, they were absolutely different, but each of them was typical of the time, the class, and the party to which she belonged.

Térèzia Cabarrus was a Spaniard, though she had also French blood in her veins. Her father, director of an important bank in Madrid, distinguished himself in the financial world, and was created Count by Charles IV.

Térèzia was born at Madrid about the year 1772, and was the only daughter of Count Cabarrus, whose fortunes had rapidly risen, and who being a man of sense and cultivation was resolved to give his children the best possible education.

Térèzia studied Latin with her brothers, spoke Spanish, Italian, and French, with almost equal fluency, conversed with ease and vivacity, sang and

danced enchantingly. Besides all this she was so extraordinarily beautiful, that she attracted general attention.

She was still very young when her father sent her to Paris with her brothers to complete their education, in the charge of an old abbé, their tutor, but to be also under the care of the Marquis de Boisgeloup and his wife, old friends of their father, in whose family they were to live. When they arrived they found that the *Marquis de Boisgeloup, Seigneur de la Mancelière* and *conseiller du Roi et du parlement*, had just died.

Mme. de Boisgeloup, however, received the children with the greatest kindness, her two boys were companions for the young Cabarrus, and as for Térèzia, she loved and treated her like a daughter. They lived in the *rue d'Anjou*, and when the following year her father arrived at Paris and bought a *hôtel* in the *place des Victoires* she still spent less of her time with him than with her.

It was in the days when the Queen was giving *fêtes* at Trianon, when the court quarrelled about the music of Gluck and Piccini, and listened to the marvels related by the Comte de Saint-Germain, when every one talked about nature, and philosophy, and virtue, and the rights of man, while swiftly and surely the Revolution was drawing near.

That the head of an excitable, thoughtless girl not sixteen, should be turned by the whirl of pleasure and admiration into which she was launched, cannot be surprising.

Among the numbers of men who made love to her more or less seriously, two were especially con-

spicuous, the Prince de Listenay and the Marquis de Fontenay.

About the former, who was deeply in love with her, and most anxious to make her his wife, she did not care at all. She found him tiresome, and even the prospect of being a princess could not induce her to marry him. Besides, she had taken a fancy to the Marquis de Fontenay, whom she had first met at the house of Mme. de Boisgeloup, who was much older than herself, and as deplorable a husband as a foolish young girl could choose.

He also had been *Conseiller du parlement*, first at Bordeaux, then at Paris; though by no means a young man, he was exceedingly handsome, fascinating, and a well-known *viveur*, added to which he was an inveterate gambler. It was said that when he was not running after some woman he was always at the card-table; in fact his reputation was atrocious. But his charming manners and various attractions won Térézia's heart. Mme. de Boisgeloup wrote to Count Cabarrus, who was then in Madrid, saying that the Marquis de Fontenay wished to marry his daughter, and did not care whether she had any fortune or not; the wedding took place, and the young Marquise was installed at his *château* of Fontenay near Paris.¹

At first all went on prosperously. The Marquis de Fontenay did not belong to the *haute noblesse*, but his position amongst the *noblesse de robe* was good, and his fortune was at any rate sufficient to enable Térézia to entertain lavishly, and to give

¹ Not to be confounded with Fontenay-Trésigny. There are a number of places named Fontenay.

fêtes which caused a sensation even at Paris, while her beauty became every day more renowned.

Whatever religious teaching she may have received she had thrown off its influence and principles, and ardently adopted the doctrines of the Revolution. Freedom, not only from tyranny, but from religion, law, morality, restraint of any kind, was the new theory adopted by her and by the party to which she belonged.

She was surrounded by those who talked of virtue, but practised vice ; her husband was amongst the most corrupt of that vicious society ; they soon ceased to care for each other ; and she was young, beautiful, worshipped, with the hot Spanish blood in her veins and all the passion of the south in her nature, what but one result could be expected ?

The King, the royal family, but especially the Queen, were becoming every day more unpopular, the reforms introduced seemed to do no good, only to incite the populace to more and more extortionate demands. The King, having neither courage nor decision, inspired neither confidence nor respect.

The Comte de Provence, his brother, remarks in his souvenirs : “ The court did not like Louis XVI., he was too uncongenial to its ways, and he did not know how to separate himself from it, and to draw nearer to the people, for there are times when a sovereign ought to know how to choose between one and the other. What calamities my unfortunate brother would have spared himself and his family, if he had known how to hold with a firm hand the sceptre Providence had entrusted to him.”¹

¹ “ Mémoires de Louis XVIII.,” t. 1, p. 17.

Nothing but reforms were talked of when Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette came to the throne ; but of course everything proposed excited the opposition and ridicule of one party or the other.

The following song, one of the many circulating at the time, is a specimen of the least objectionable of its kind :

“ Or, écoutez, petits et grands,
L'histoire d'un roi de vingt ans,
Qui va nous ramener en France
Les bonnes mœurs et l'abondance.
D'après ce plan que deviendront
Et les catins et les fripons ?

S'il vent de l'honneur et des mœurs,
Que deviendront nos grands seigneurs ?
S'il aime les honnêtes femmes,
Que deviendront nos belles dames ?
S'il bannit les gens déréglés
Que feront nos riches abbés ?

S'il dédaigne un frivole encens,
Que deviendront les courtisans ?
Que feront les amis du prince
Autrement nommés en province ?
Si ses sujets sont ses enfants,
Que deviendront les partisans ?

S'il vet qu'un prélat soit chrétien,
Un magistrat homme de bien,
Combien de juges mercénaires,
D'évêques et de grands vicaires,
Vont changer de conduite, *amen.*
Dominus salvum fac regem.”¹

The Queen had no idea of economy, and the Comte d'Artois was still more extravagant and heed-

¹ “ Mémoires de Louis XVIII.,” t. I, p. 290.

less. Many were the absurd stories told of him, harmless and otherwise. Of the first description is the affair of the wig of M. de Montyon. Arriving early one morning to speak to him, and seeing no servants about, he mistook the door and walked unannounced into a room where he saw a young man in his shirt sleeves, with his hair all rough and his toilette very incomplete, who, astonished at the sudden entrance of a magistrate in an enormous wig, asked him brusquely what he was doing there.

M. de Montyon, taking him for a *valet de pied*, called him an insolent rascal for daring to speak to him in such a manner; but no sooner were the words spoken than the young man snatched off his wig, rubbed it over his face and ran away with shouts of laughter.

M. de Montyon was furious, he flew into a rage, called till he succeeded in attracting attention, and then, discovering that the young man he had called an insolent rascal was his royal Highness, *Monsieur le Comte d'Artois*, hurried away in dismay.

The King hearing of the affair was much amused, but desired his brother to make it right with M. de Montyon, which he did to such good effect, that shortly after he gave him an appointment in his household. The Prince and the excellent magistrate afterwards met again in exile.

Another and more reprehensible episode took place when the Comte d'Artois, then a lad of sixteen, was just going to be married to the younger sister of the Comtesse de Provence, daughter of the King of Sardinia.

It was before the death of Louis XV., the court was at Compiègne, and the young Prince, since his marriage was decided, had been less strictly looked after by the Comte de Montbel, his *sous gouverneur*, who would not usually allow him to go alone into the thicker parts of the forest, not because of wild beasts but of other not less dangerous encounters which were possible.

For some little time the *Comte d'Artois* had been regarding the sister of one of his *valets de pied* with an admiration which she was evidently quite ready to return. Finding some difficulty in getting an interview with her, he applied to her brother who, delighted at the fancy of the Prince for his sister, and the probable advantages it might bring, promised his assistance, and arranged that the young girl, who was extremely pretty, should meet him dressed as a peasant in the cottage of a forester of Compiègne.

D'Artois accordingly told M. de Montbel that he wished to make an excursion into the forest, but when the carriage came round which had been ordered for him, he said he would rather walk, and took care to go so far out of the way that his tutor was very tired.

The Prince, who was not tired at all, and who had arrived in sight of the cottage, said he would like some milk and would go and see the cows milked.

"You stay here and rest, Montbel," he continued. "I will come back in a few minutes."

M. de Montbel had waited for nearly an hour, when suddenly a suspicion seized him. Springing

up suddenly he ran to the cottage, opened the door of one room, then another, then a third, and stood still with a cry of consternation.

“Monsieur,” said the Prince, coolly, “was there no one to announce you?”

Launching into angry threats against the *valet de pied* and his sister, and indignant reproaches to his pupil, M. de Montbel conducted him back to the palace and went straight to the King. But Louis XV., with a fellow-feeling for the grandson whom he considered the most like himself, could not restrain his laughter, ordered fifty *louis* to be given to the young girl, and dismissed the affair.

The alliances with the House of Savoy were much more popular with the court than that with the House of Austria and Lorraine,¹ and caused continual jealousies and disputes. Foreseeing that such would be the case, Louis XV., before the marriage of the Comte de Provence, thought it necessary to caution him on the subject. Louis XVIII. gives in his memoirs² the following account of the interview:—

“When my alliance with the Princess of Piedmont was decided, the Duc de Vauguyon told me that the King desired to speak to me. I trembled a little at an order which differed entirely from the usual regulations, for I never saw Louis XV. without d’Artois, and at certain hours. A private audience of his Majesty without my having asked for it gave me cause for anxiety. . . .

¹ The Emperor, husband of Maria-Theresa, and father of Marie Antoinette, was François de Lorraine.

² T. I, pp. 59-62.

“Louis XV. stood leaning against a great inlaid bureau near the window. My grandfather was just then playing with a beautiful sporting dog of which he was very fond. I approached the King with timidity and embarrassment, but I soon perceived that he was in a good humour. . . .”

“‘Bonjour, Provençal,’¹ he said. ‘You are looking very well, and that is so much the better, *ma foi!* for it has never been of more importance to you. You are going to be married.’

“‘Your Majesty’s orders have been communicated to me.’

“‘They may have left out something,’ replied he, laughing. ‘I have no time to lose, and I tell you that I wish to be a great-grandfather as soon as possible.’

“‘Sire, I know that it is my duty to obey your Majesty in all things.’

“‘I have no doubt of it; and if circumstances favour you, I hope you will leave M. le Dauphin far behind.’

“I bowed with a half-smile that seemed to amuse the King. But resuming his usually grave and majestic air, he added—

“‘I particularly wished to see you, to warn you that you must take great care that your future wife never forgets what will be due from her to the Dauphine. Their two houses are divided, but all rivalry must be forgotten here, which would disturb the tranquillity of Versailles, and would supremely displease me. I know that you have sense beyond your age, therefore I flatter myself that you will not

¹ His nick-name for his second grandson.

do, nor allow to be done, anything with regard to the Dauphine which might displease her. Besides, your brother would not suffer it; he loves his wife, and is determined that she shall be respected as she deserves. Keep watch, therefore, upon yours; in fact, see that things go on in such a manner that I am not obliged to interfere.'

"I replied to the King that this would be all the easier to me as I had no greater wish than to be on good terms with my brother and sister-in-law; adding: 'I know the respect which I owe your Majesty, and that which the heir to the throne has a right to expect from me; in which I hope never to be accused of having failed.'

"'Very well,' replied the King; 'but what I fear is, that notwithstanding your good intentions, you will be surrounded by persons whose influence will mislead you, and owing to evil counsellors, your own abilities may perhaps even lead you to commit follies.'

"'I am certain, sire,' I answered hastily; 'that nobody about me will be able to make me deviate from the line my own reason has already marked out. But as your Majesty has introduced the subject, may I be permitted to suggest that my sister-in-law has already near her some one who is scarcely calculated to maintain a good understanding in the family; I fear the partiality of the Abbé de Vermont for the House of Austria.'

"'Yes, my dear son,' said the King, making use for the first time of that paternal expression; 'I know as well as you do that this abbé is not well-disposed towards us; but can I take him away from

a young woman whom he has educated,¹ and who requires somebody to confide in? Besides, she might choose worse; he is a man without personal ambition, religious and upright, in spite of his leaning to the House of Austria. It will be the Dauphin's business to keep him within proper limits; and now I have warned you about what made me most uneasy I feel more satisfied, for I desire above all things that the peace of my family should never be troubled."

The interview closed to the mutual satisfaction of the King and his grandson, neither of them with the slightest idea of any more serious calamity than the quarrels at court between the Houses of Lorraine and Savoy being likely to interfere with the secure and magnificent tranquillity of their lives. But it wanted only eighteen years and a few months to the fall of the Bastille, and though the small-pox cut short the life of Louis XV. before the evil days, they were seen by many of his courtiers as old or older than himself.

But nothing would ever have induced him as long as he lived to allow the States-General to be summoned. He regarded them with an unchanging abhorrence which seems prophetic.

One evening, during his *coucher*, the conversation turning upon difficulties in the financial situation owing to the refusal of the parliaments of the different provinces to enregister certain taxes, a man highly placed in the King's household remarked—

"You will see, sire, that all this will necessitate the assembly of the States-General": whereupon

¹ The Abbé de Vermont was the confessor of Marie Antoinette.

Louis XV., abandoning the calm repose of his usual manner, seized him by the arm, exclaiming vehemently—

“Never repeat those words! I am not blood-thirsty, but if I had a brother and he were capable of offering such advice I would sacrifice him in twenty-four hours to the duration of the monarchy and the tranquillity of the kingdom.”¹

It was remarked later that under Louis XIV. no one dared think or speak; under Louis XV. they thought but dared not speak; but under Louis XVI. every one thought and spoke whatever they chose without fear or respect.

¹ Campan, “*Mémoires des Marie Antoinette, &c., &c.*,” t. 1, p. 392.



MARIE DE VICHY-CHAMBRON, MARQUISE DU DEFFAND

CHAPTER II

The makers of the Revolution—*Fête à la Nature*—Tallien—Dangerous times—An inharmonious marriage—Colonel la Mothe—A Terrorist—The beginning of the emigration—A sinister prophecy.

AS M. Arsène Houssaye truly remarks, the French Revolution was not made by the people. They imagine that they made it, but the real authors were Voltaire, Condorcet, Chamfort, the two Mirabeau, La Fayette and his friends, Necker, Talleyrand, Barras, Saint-Just, &c., nearly all gentlemen, mostly nobles; by Philippe-Égalité, Duke of Orléans and prince of the blood; by Louis XVI. himself.

The new ideas were the fashion, people, especially young people, believed with enthusiastic fervour in the absurd and impracticable state of things they imagined they were about to establish, but meanwhile, though they talked of the rights of man and the sufferings of the people, they went on just the same, lavishing enormous sums upon dress, luxury, and costly entertainments.

The stately order, the devotion and charity which filled the lives of the sisters de Noailles; the absorbing passion for her art which made the happi-

ness, the safety, and the renown of Louise Vigée, were not for Térézia. Her very talents were an additional danger and temptation, for they increased the attraction of her extraordinary beauty; and in the set of which her friends were composed there could be no principles of right and wrong, because there was no authority to determine them. For if God did not exist at all, or only as a colourless abstraction, then the words "right" and "wrong" meant nothing, and what, in that case, was to regulate people's lives? Why not injure their neighbours if it were convenient to themselves to do so? Why should they tell the truth if they preferred to tell lies? To some it would seem noble to forgive their enemies; to others it would seem silly. To some, family affection and respect for parents would appear an indispensable virtue; to others an exploded superstition. It was all a matter of opinion; who was to decide when one man's opinion was as good as another? But, however such theories might serve to regulate the lives of a few dreamy, cold-blooded philosophers occupied entirely with their studies and speculations, it seems difficult to understand that any one could really believe in the possibility of their controlling the average mass of human beings; who, if not restrained by the fear of a supernatural power which they believe able to protect, reward, or punish them, are not likely to be influenced by the exhortations of those who can offer them no such inducements. Nevertheless, these ideas were very prevalent until Napoleon, who regarded them with contempt, declared that without religion no

government was possible, and, whether he believed in it or not, re-established Christianity.

Meanwhile, those who could not believe in God, set up as their guide the abstraction they called Nature, which, if they had followed to the logical consequences, would have led them back to the state of savages. There were, in fact, some who proposed to live out of doors with very scanty clothing, and who had begun to cut down a tree and light a fire when their plans of life were suddenly frustrated by the appearance of the police.

But these were not the directions in which the guidance of Nature led most of her followers. It was not to a life of primitive simplicity and discomfort that Térésia and her friends felt themselves directed; no, the *hôtel de Fontenay*, in the *rue de Paradis*, and the *château* of the same name in the country were the scene of ceaseless gaiety and amusement. La Rochefoucauld, Rivarol, Chamfort, La Fayette, the three brothers de Lameth, all of whom were in love with their fascinating hostess; Mirabeau, Barnave, Vergniaud, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins—all the leaders of the radical party were to be met at her parties, and most of them were present at a splendid entertainment given by the Marquis and Marquise de Fontenay to the *Constituants* at their *château*, and called, after the fashion of Rousseau, a *fête à la Nature*.

The guests were met at the park gates by young girls dressed in white, who gave them bouquets of flowers; they dined out of doors under the shade of chestnut-trees, while a band played airs from "Richard Cœur-de-Lion," "Castor et Pollux," &c.;

the only *contretemps* being a sudden gust of wind which took off the wigs of some of the guests: Robespierre amongst the number. Many beautiful women were present, but none could rival their lovely hostess. Toasts were drunk to her beauty, verses improvised to her Spanish eyes, her French *esprit*; she was declared the goddess of the *fête*, *queen* being no longer a popular word.

In all her life she never lost the recollection of the enchantment of that day, and many years later, in her altered surroundings, would say to her children, "Ah! that day was the *fête de ma jeunesse!*"

The first meeting of Térézia with the man who was to play the most important part in her life took place in the studio of Mme. Le Brun, to be painted by whom was then the height of fashion. Mme. Le Brun, enraptured with her beauty and dissatisfied with her own representation of it, was a long time altering and retouching, and every day saw some new improvement to make.

Mme. de Fontenay became impatient, for the sittings appeared to be interminable, and at last M. de Fontenay begged several of his friends to go and look at the portrait of his wife and give their opinion while it was still in the studio. It was in consequence more crowded than usual one day when M. de Fontenay, being also present, was joining in a conversation going on about David and his pictures.

"You will see," said Rivarol, "that these haughty Romans whom M. Louis David has brought into fashion with his cold, hard painting, will bring us



FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE

To face page 284

through a period of Cato and Brutus. It is the law of contrast. After the solemn airs of Louis XIV., the orgies of Louis XV.; after the suppers of Sardanapalus - Pompadour, the milk and water breakfasts of Titus—Louis XVI. The French nation had too much *esprit*, they are now going to saturate themselves with stupidity.”

“And do you imagine,” cried Mme. Le Brun, “that it is David who has given the taste for the antique? It is not: it is I! It was my Greek supper, which they turned into a Roman orgy, which set the fashion. Fashion is a woman. It is always a woman who imposes the fashion, as the Comtesse Du Barry said.”

“*Apropos*,” exclaimed Mme. de Fontenay; “have not you begun her portrait?”

“The poor Countess! I am representing her reading a romance with the arms of the King. She is the only person who holds to the King now.”

The conversation was presently interrupted by a young man whom nobody seemed to know.

As Mme. Le Brun had not many servants, he had found nobody to announce him, but entered without the least shyness, and walking up to M. de Rivarol, said that he wanted to speak to him about a pamphlet of his, now being printed at the establishment in which he was employed. There was a passage in it which they could not read or did not understand, and M. de Rivarol’s servant having told him where his master was to be found, he had come after him.

There had been a sudden silence when he entered; no one saluted him but Mme. Le Brun, who greeted

him with a smile, but all regarded him with curiosity. His dress was not like those of the gentlemen present, nor of their class at all ; it had a sort of Bohemian picturesqueness which rather suited his handsome, striking, sarcastic face ; he was very young, not more than about twenty, but he spoke and moved with perfect unconcern amongst the uncongenial society into which he had fallen. Mme. Le Brun, tired of the stupid, contradictory remarks of the amateurs who then, as now, were eager to criticise what they knew nothing about, and nearly always said the wrong thing, exclaimed impatiently—

“ You are all bad judges—

“ *Détestables flatteurs, présent le plus funeste,
Que puisse faire aux arts la colère céleste !*

“ I do not believe one word of your opinions. I am like Molière, I would rather appeal to my servant, but as she is not here I will, if you do not object, ask that young man, who does not look like a flatterer : he will tell us the truth.” And turning to him, she said—

“ Monsieur, I have just been hearing so much nonsense about this portrait, that really I don't know whether I have been working like an artist or a sign-painter.”

“ I will tell you, Madame,” replied the young man, with an assurance that surprised every one present. They looked at him with astonishment, and he looked at the portrait, and still more earnestly at the Marquise de Fontenay, upon whom his long, ardent gaze made a strange impression. After a few moments' silence, Mme. Le Brun said—

"Well, Monsieur, I am waiting for your criticism."

"My criticism, Madame, is this. It seemed to me just now that they accused you of having made the eyes too small and the mouth too large. Well, if you will believe me, you will slightly lower the upper eyelids and open imperceptibly the corner of the lips. Thus you will have almost the charm of that sculpturesque and expressive face. The eyes will be still brighter when their brilliance shines from between the eyelids like the sun through the branches."

With a few more words of mingled criticism and compliment, he bowed slightly and turned again to M. Rivarol.

It was Tallien.

The next time they met he was secretary to Alexandre de Lameth. Térézia was standing on the steps of their *hôtel* with Mme. Charles de Lameth when he came with his hands full of letters.

Telling him that Alexandre was not in, Mme. de Lameth asked him to gather a bunch of roses for Mme. de Fontenay, which he did, and picking up one that fell, he kept it, bowed silently, and went in.

Térézia questioned her friend about him, and was told that he was a good secretary, clever but idle, and of so bad a reputation that M. de Lameth was waiting for an opportunity to get rid of him.

Tallien was the acknowledged son of the *maitre-d'hôtel* of the Marquis de Bercy, but strongly suspected of being the son of the Marquis himself, who was his godfather and paid his expenses at a college from which he ran away when he was

fifteen. Already an athiest and a revolutionist, besides being a lazy scoundrel who would not work, he was, after a violent scene with the Marquis, abandoned by him, after which he quarrelled with his reputed father, a worthy man with several other children, who declined to support him in idleness, and threatened him with his curse. "*Taisez-vous, mon père, cela ne se fait plus dans le monde,*" was the answer of the future *septembriseur*. His mother, however, interposed, and it was arranged that he should continue to live at home and should study in the office of a *procureur*. Step by step he rose into notoriety, until he was elected a member of the commune of Paris, where he was soon recognised as one of the most violent of the revolutionists.

In spite of his friendships with the leaders of the Revolution, his adoption at first of many of their ideas, and the *fête Constitutionnelle* he gave in their honour, M. de Fontenay, like many others, began to see that things were going much further than he expected or wished. He was neither a young, foolish, generous enthusiast like La Fayette, de Ségur, de Noailles, and their set, nor a low ruffian thirsting for plunder and bloodshed, nor a penniless adventurer with everything to gain and nothing to lose; but an elderly man of rank, fortune, and knowledge of the world, who, however he might have tampered with the philosophers and revolutionists, as it was the fashion to do, had no sort of illusions about them, no sympathy whatever with their plans, and the greatest possible objection to being deprived of his title of Marquis, his property, or his life. In fact, he began to consider

whether it would not be more prudent to leave the country and join M. Cabarrus in Spain, for he was not separated from his wife, nor was there any open disagreement between them. They simply seem to have taken their own ways, which were not likely to have been the same. Térésia was then much more inclined to the Revolution than her husband, believing with all the credulity of youth in the happiness and prosperity it was to establish. Of her life during 1791 and the first part of 1792 little or nothing is known with any certainty, though Mme. d'Abrantés relates an anecdote told by a Colonel La Mothe which points to her being in Bordeaux, living or staying with her brother, M. Cabarrus, and an uncle, M. Jalabert, a banker, each of whom watched her with all the jealousy of a Spanish duenna, the brother being at the same time so disagreeable that it was almost impossible to be in his company without quarrelling with him.

Why, in that case, Térésia should have allowed them to interfere with her appears perplexing, as they would, of course, have had no authority to do so. M. La Mothe proceeded to say that he and a certain M. Edouard de C——, both of whom were in love with her, accompanied them to Bagnères de Bigorre. There he and Édouard de C—— quarrelled and fought a duel, in which he, M. La Mothe, was wounded; whereupon Térésia, touched by his danger and returning his love for her, remained to nurse him, while his rival departed; and informing her uncle and brother that she declined any further interference on their part, dismissed them. That the uncle returned to his bank in Bayonne, and

the brother, with Edouard de C——, to the army ; that Cabarrus was killed the following year ; and that, after some time, M. La Mothe and Térèzia were separated by circumstances, he having to rejoin his regiment, while she remained at Bordeaux.¹ But however the principles she had adopted may have relaxed her ideas of morality, they never, as will be seen during the history of her life, interfered with the courage, generosity, and kindness of heart which formed so conspicuous a part of her character, and which so often met with such odious ingratitude.

In the latter part of the summer of 1792 she was in Paris, which, in spite of her revolutionary professions, was no safe abode even for her, certainly not for her husband. The slightest sympathy shown to an *émigré*, a priest, a royalist, or any one marked as a prey by the bloodthirsty monsters who were rapidly showing themselves in their true colours, might be the death-warrant of whoever dared to show it. So would any word or gesture of disapproval of the crimes these miscreants were ordering and perpetrating. Their spies were everywhere, and the least accusation, very often only caused by a private grudge, was enough to bring a person, and perhaps their whole family, to prison and the scaffold. In the early days of the Terror, the well-known actor Talma, hearing an acquaintance named Alexandre, a member of his own profession, giving vent in a benign voice to the most atrocious language of the Terrorists, indignantly reproached him.

¹ "Salons de Paris" (Duchesse d'Abrantes).

"*Que tu'es bon!*" exclaimed Alexandre, drawing him aside. "Do you think I mean all that?"

"Then why say it?"

"Because that Terrorist is listening."

"Who do you mean?"

"Who? Why that little Bouchiez," indicating one of the officials of the theatre. "Whenever he is near me I say the same sort of things. I should say more if I could."

"And why?"

"Because, if I spoke differently, he would denounce me to the Jacobins and have me guillotined."

"He! Why, I thought you were friends."

"We! friends! *Allons donc!*"

"*Vous vous tutoyez.*"¹

"What does that prove? Do not all these brutes say *tu* nowadays?"

"Well, but you call yourself friends."

"That's true; but I don't like him any the better for that, the wretch! Ah, I hate him! *how* I hate him! *how* I hate him! But there he is coming back, so I shall begin again!" And so he did.²

To escape from France was now both difficult and dangerous. The first to emigrate had been the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois and their children, the Prince de Condé, Duc de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien, Mlle. de Condé, Prince de Lambesc, Maréchaux de Broglie et de Castries, Duc de la Vauguyon, Comte de Vaudreuil, and a long string

¹ *Tutoyer* is an expression impossible to translate. It means the use of the second person singular, "thou," instead of "you," and is a mark of the greatest intimacy.

² "Souvenirs d'un Sexagenaire" (Arnault).

of other great names—Mailly, Bourbon-Busset, d'Aligre, de Mirepoix, all the Polignac and Polastron, the Abbé de Vermont, &c. They left at night under borrowed names. The Queen fainted when she parted from the Duchesse de Polignac, who was carried unconscious to the carriage by the Comte de Vaudreuil.¹

The grief of the Duchesse de Polignac was aggravated by the recollection of a sinister prophecy which, although at the time it seemed incredible, was apparently being fulfilled in an alarming manner. The circumstances were as follows:—

The Comtesse d'Adhémar, who held a post in the Queen's household, received one day a note from the Duchesse de Polignac, "Governess of the Children of France," asking her to go with her to consult a fortune-teller of whom every one was talking. For many persons who declined to believe in God were ready and eager to put confidence in witchcraft, fortune-telling, spiritualism, or any other form of occult proceedings.

Carefully disguising themselves, they set off together—of course, at night—taking only the Duchess's maid, Mlle. Robert, who, though devoted to her mistress, had been silly enough to persuade her to this folly, and by an old porter belonging to the palace, who knew the way.

Through many little, narrow streets they at last got out into the country, and arrived at the filthy, ruinous cottage where lived the fortune-teller. They gave her each an *écu*, not wishing by too lavish a payment to betray themselves, and the

¹ "Souvenirs de la Comtesse d'Adhémar."

Comtesse d'Adhémar was the first to place her hand in the dirty, wrinkled one of the old gipsy, who, after telling her that she had had two husbands, and would have no more, added, "You are now in the service of a good mistress, who loves you; but before long she will send you away against her will, but she will no longer be free to do as she chooses."

Then, taking the hand of Mme. de Polignac she turned it over several times, examining it carefully, and said: "You are, like the other, in the service of the same lady, who loves you so much that she confides to you her most precious jewels. You love her just as much, but still, in a short time you will leave that lady in haste, and what is more, you will not feel tranquil until you have put three great rivers between you and her. She will cry bitterly when you leave her and yet be very glad of the separation."

Mme. de Polignac shuddered; exclaiming that she would never of her own accord leave her mistress, or if an absence was necessary to her health it should be a short one.

"Oh! for that matter," said the gipsy, "it will have no limit."

"What! Shall I never see my mistress again?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because she will die."

A cry of horror escaped the two friends and Mlle. Robert began to threaten the gipsy.

"Hold your tongue, *tête-qui-roule*," she cried angrily. "Your body will be food for dogs."

Horror-stricken and frightened they hurried from the cottage, but the prophecies were all fulfilled. Marie Antoinette rejoiced at their parting as they were going to safety. The three rivers were apparently the Seine, Rhine, and Danube which Mme. de Polignac crossed on her way to Vienna. As to Mlle. Robert, she paid with her life for her faithful affection for her mistress. Insisting on remaining in Paris to look after her interests she was arrested on the 10th of August and perished in the September massacres.

The Queen and the Comte d'Artois were the most hated and threatened of the royal family. Now, as always, they urged the miserable Louis to defend himself as his forefathers would have done; the Prince de Condé was of their opinion. Let the King defend himself when his palace was attacked, and, if necessary, sally out at the head of his loyal followers and either save his crown and his life, or, if that could not be, fall gloriously with his sword in his hand like a son of Henri IV., instead of being taken by his own subjects like a rat in a hole.

Such were the exhortations which at one time or another were poured into the King's ears and to which he would never listen.¹ There was no more

¹ At one of the most terrible crises in 1792, the Queen went into the King's room and found him mending a lock and key. "Since you are so well used to handling steel!" she exclaimed, "why do you not take a sword?" "A sword!" he said, mechanically. "You have played Titus," she went on, "now show yourself the descendant of Henry IV., the time has come, if you love your life you must, as chief of your race, try to conquer your kingdom!" "You look on the dark side of things," said he, "things are going badly, but with time passions will calm down and then——" "Another family will be on your throne, Sire," said she, throwing

to be said. The Comte d'Artois declared he would never leave his brother unless expressly ordered to do so. Louis gave that command, desiring the Prince to escape with his wife and children to their sister Clotilde at Turin ; and then with tears and sobs the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois embraced the King and Queen and tore themselves away.

The Comte de Provence did not emigrate so soon. He had been more inclined to liberal ideas and was less unpopular than the Comte d'Artois. It was not until the time of the unfortunate attempt on the royal family that he also resolved to escape, and his plans, being well-arranged and properly carried out, succeeded perfectly.

He was then living in the Luxembourg, and having made all preparations, he went to bed as usual and drew the curtains ; the *valet-de-chambre*, who always slept in a bed rolled into his room, went away to undress. When he was gone, the Comte de Provence got up, passed into his dressing-room, where his devoted friend and confidant, M. d'Avaray, awaited him and helped him to dress. Passing out by a small door that was not guarded, they got into a carriage waiting for them in the courtyard of the Luxembourg and drove away.

herself on her knees. "In the name of God, of your children, of your subjects, of your poor sister who has sacrificed herself to stay with us, cease to persist in this fatal apathy." . . . With a voice broken by sobs and tears she went on with her entreaties. The King laid down his tools, looked at her with sorrowful embarrassment, and said it was not his fault, she must have patience !!

When, after being forced to hear in the Assembly the deposition of the King, Marie Antoinette exclaimed, "Ah ! Sire, it would have been better to have died all together in the Tuileries" ("Souvenirs de Comtesse d'Adhémar").

He met the Comtesse de Provence as they had arranged, having taken the precaution of escaping separately. They arrived at Brussels in safety, and afterwards joined their brother and sister at the court of the Countess's father, at Turin, where they were joyfully received by the Princess Clotilde, and afterwards rejoined by their aunts.¹

¹ "Souvenirs d'un Sexagenaire" (Arnault). "Souvenirs de Louis XVIII."

CHAPTER III

The 10th of August—The September massacres—Tallien—The emigrant ship—Arrest at Bordeaux—In prison—Saved by Tallien.

ON the 10th of August, 1792, as every one knows, the fury of the Revolution broke out in the attack upon the Tuileries. For the third time Térézia saw Tallien soon after that carnival of horror and bloodshed of which he was one of the leading spirits; when a few days after it she sat in one of the tribunes of the Assembly and applauded the fiery speech in which he defied the enemies of France, for the armies of the allies and the *émigrés* were gathering on the frontier, eager to avenge the atrocities which had been and were being committed, and rescue the royal family. Unluckily it was another failure. The incompetence of the leaders, the delays, the mismanagement, the mistakes, the disasters, cannot of course be entered into in a sketch like this, but the effect it had upon the fate of those still in prison and in danger who remained in the hands of the tigers thirsting for their blood, was terrible indeed.

No sooner had the news of their first ephemeral

successes at Longwy and Verdun arrived at Paris, and at the same time the rising in La Vendée become known, than there was a rush to arms, to the frontier, to drive back the invaders from the soil of France. The revolutionists seized their opportunity to declare that the royalists left in France would help the invaders by conspiring at home. It was enough. The thirst for blood and slaughter, never equalled or approached by any other civilised nation, which characterised the French Revolution, burst forth with unheard of atrocity. The September massacres were the result, and of the order for this horrible crime Tallien and Danton were chiefly accused.

Danton did not attempt to deny the part he had taken, but declared that it was necessary to strike terror amongst their opponents and that he accepted the responsibility.

Tallien had stepped into the place of Guy de Kersaint, deputy of Versailles, who, though a revolutionist, objected to massacres.¹ He tried to explain and excuse them by the fury and excitement of the time when he perceived the horror with which they were regarded, not only by the civilised world at large, but by many of the revolutionists, even by some of his own colleagues. However, the brand of infamy remained attached to his name, notwithstanding his endeavours to clear himself from

¹ Guy de Kersaint, after the September massacres, sent in his resignation, saying "If the love of my country has made me endure the misfortune of being the colleague of the panegyrists and promoters of the assassinations of the 2nd of September I will at least protect my memory from being their accomplice."—"Notre Dame de Thermidor" (Arsène Houssaye).

the suspicion and accusation which have nevertheless always clung to him.

"There are many," he said in one of his speeches, "who accuse me of being a murderer of the 2nd of September, to stifle my voice because they know I saw it all. They know that I used the authority I possessed to save a great number of persons from the hand of the assassin, they know that I alone in the midst of the Commune, dared throw myself before the sanguinary multitude to prevent their violating the *depôts* entrusted to the Commune. I defy any one to accuse me of crime or even of weakness. I did my duty on that occasion. . . ." But the name of "*septembriseur*" clung to him for ever in spite of his protestations.

Through all this time it is not clear exactly where Térézia was, probably at Paris and at Fontenay, but the relations between herself and her husband did not improve, and without any violent enmity between them, she had several times thought of getting a divorce from him.

She had not done so, however, and had even consented to his plan of their both leaving France and taking refuge with her father in Spain. She wished no harm to M. de Fontenay, and although in spite of all that had happened she still believed in the Revolution, its principles, and future results, she was horrified at the cruelty and atrocities going on around her at present.

She was conscious also that her own position was not safe. She had many friends amongst the Girondins, and now terrified at their fall she felt that she was compromised by her association with

them ; her husband was an additional peril to her, for the new abomination called *loi contre des suspects* was aimed at those against whom no tangible thing could be brought forward, but who might be accused of "having done nothing for the Republic" and would certainly apply to him. M. de Fontenay had hidden himself for a time and then reappeared, and seeing they were both in great danger she agreed to his proposal and they went first to Bordeaux, intending shortly to put the Pyrenees between themselves and the Revolution. But swiftly and suddenly the danger that had struck down so many of their acquaintances fell like a thunderbolt upon them.

They were staying with an uncle of hers at Bordeaux when she heard one day that an English ship with three hundred passengers, chiefly royalists of Bordeaux, but all of them persons flying from France, was on the point of sailing, but was detained because the captain, whose conduct in this matter one cannot help saying few Englishmen indeed would not have despised, refused to sail until he had received three thousand francs wanting to the sum owing by the emigrants.

Indignant at the avarice which risked the lives of the unfortunate passengers, Térésia, disregarding the remonstrances and warnings of her husband and uncle, ordered a carriage, drove to find the captain, paid him the three thousand francs, and returned in triumph with a list of the passengers which she had made the captain give her instead of the receipt he wished to write.

But while Térésia congratulated herself that she had happened to be at Bordeaux, the story got

about, and the fierce populace were infuriated at the escape of their intended prey. Their first revenge was directed towards the captain, through whose unguarded talk about "a beautiful woman who looked like a *grande dame*, and had suddenly appeared and paid him the money," was the cause of the mischief. They made a furious attack upon him, several of them rushing at him to drag him to the guillotine. But if he was avaricious the English captain was brave and strong, so, drawing his sword with shouts and threats he wounded three or four, drove back the rest, regained his ship, and set sail for England.

As Térésia was walking in the town with her two uncles they were suddenly surrounded by a furious crowd, who, with shouts of "*La voilà ! La voilà ! celle qui a sauvé les aristocrates*," surrounded her, and in a moment she was separated from her uncles, her mantilla torn off, while angry voices, with fierce threats, demanded the list of fugitives.

"What do you want with me?" she asked coolly, "I am not an enemy of the people; you can see by my cockade that I am a patriot."

"Let her give us the list!" was the cry.

Seeing at once what was the question, she answered: "You are mistaken, *citoyens*, those who embarked were not *contre-revolutionnaires*."

"Well, then, give us the list for you have it in your bosom!" And one brutal fellow tried to tear her *corsage* to get it.

Thrusting him away she pulled out the list, held it up to the *sans-culottes*, and exclaimed with defiance—

“I will never give it you! If you want to get it, kill me!” And she swallowed it.

At that moment Tallien, who had been sent to Bordeaux by the Revolutionary authorities, appeared upon the scene.

“Stop!” he cried; “I know that woman.”

He did not, in fact, recognise her at all, but he wished to save her. Turning to the crowd, he said—

“If she is guilty she belongs to justice. But you are too magnanimous to strike an unarmed enemy, above all, a woman.”

Just then Lacombe, president of the tribunal, who had been told that the aristocrats who went with the English captain were saved by her, came up and ordered her arrest.

At the same time Tallien recognised the Marquise de Fontenay.

Térèzia, therefore, found herself in one of the horrible prisons of that Revolution whose progress she had done everything in her power to assist. In the darkness and gloom of its dungeon she afterwards declared that the rats had bitten her feet.

In a very short time, however, she was summoned out of the prison and conducted by the gaolers into the presence of Tallien.

In the fearful tragedy of the French Revolution, as in many earlier dramas in the history of that nation, one can hardly fail to be struck by the extreme youth of many, perhaps most, of the leading characters, good or bad. And the hero and heroine of this act in the revolutionary drama were young, and both remarkable for their beauty.

Tallien, the member of the Assembly, the blood-stained popular leader, the pro-consul before whom every one trembled in Bordeaux, was five-and-twenty. The Marquise de Fontenay, who stood before him, knowing that her life was in his hands, was not yet twenty.

The position was changed indeed since their first meeting, when, unknown and unconsidered, he was invited, in a manner that could scarcely be called complimentary, to criticise the portrait of the beautiful, fashionable woman who now stood before him as lovely as ever, her face pale, and her soft dark eyes raised anxiously to his, but without any symptom of terror.

From the first moment of this interview Tallien was seized with an overpowering passion for her, which he was compelled to conceal by the presence of the gaoler, who waited to re-conduct the prisoner to her cell, and before whom if he showed either pity or sympathy, in spite of all his power as a leader of the Revolution, he would endanger his own safety and increase her danger. Therefore he only bowed, signed to her to sit down, and took a chair opposite her.

“You recognised me?” she asked.

“Yes, *citoyenne*; why are you at Bordeaux?”

“Because every one is in prison at Paris; even the revolutionists. And I am a revolutionist.”

“We are not blind,” said Tallien. “We only strike the enemies of the Republic.”

“The prisons are blind, then,” retorted Térézia; “for both at Paris and here true republicans are groaning in fetters.”

She spoke in the inflated style of the time, which belonged especially to the ranting, extravagant, theatrical phraseology of that strange collection of individuals who now held supreme power in the country so recently the most civilised and polished in the world.

“If the prison is blind, the tribunal is not. Of what are you accused, *citoyenne*?”

“Of everything, I suppose, since there is nothing they can bring against me.”

“I heard you were intending to emigrate with the *ci-devant* Marquis de Fontenay.”

“Emigrate? I never thought of such a thing. We were going to Spain to see my father, who is there.”

“Well, *citoyenne*, I shall give orders for your trial to come on at once before the tribunal. If the *citoyen* Fontenay is not guilty you are not either. In consequence you will be able to go on and see your father at Madrid.”

“Good God!” cried Térésia; “appear before your tribunal! But I am condemned beforehand! A poor creature who is the daughter of a count, the wife of a marquis, with a hand like this, which has never done any work but prepare lint for the wounded of the 10th of August.”

“You are wrong, *citoyenne*, to doubt the justice of the tribunal, we have not created it to assassinate in the name of the law, but to avenge the republic and proclaim innocence.”

He spoke in the pompous jargon of the Revolution, the language of his paper, *L'Ami des Citoyens*. Then turning to the gaoler he sent him away upon

a message. When the door had closed behind the spy of his party, in whose presence even he himself dared not speak freely, he took the hand of Térésia and said in a gentle voice—

“We are not tyrants.”

To which astounding assertion she replied in those terms of flattery in which alone it was safe to address the individuals who “were not tyrants,” and whose motto was “Liberty, equality, and fraternity.”

“I suppose he who writes so eloquently in *L'Ami des Citoyens* is also the friend of the *citoyennes*? If you are my friend, for the sake of the *citoyenne*, Lameth,¹ do not make me appear before that odious tribunal, on which *you* do not sit.”

“I cannot help it,” answered he; “the eyes of France are upon me. If I betrayed my commission for the sake of a beautiful woman like you, Robespierre would not have thunderbolts enough to strike me with.”

“Just so,” she said; “you all strike because you are afraid of being struck yourselves.”

“Well; what do you want?”

“You know. I want liberty.”

“I understand.”

“And the liberty of M. de Fontenay.”

“Of that I wash my hands,” he exclaimed hastily. Then softening his voice: “I was told you were divorced?”

“Perhaps so; but at this moment I am more than ever the wife of my husband.”

“But if he is guilty and you are not?”

¹ Wife of Charles de Lameth.

"Then I will be guilty too."

There was a moment's silence, then Tallien spoke.

"Well! it is worthy of the days of antiquity. But in these times it is not to a husband but to the nation that a *citoyenne* should sacrifice herself. If you have done any wrong to the Republic, it is in your power publicly to expiate it. In public affairs women must preach and set the example. If I ask for your liberty it must be on condition that you promise to be the Egeria of the Montagne, as the Roland was of the Gironde."

"I know neither the Montagne nor the Gironde. I know the people, and I love and serve them. Give me a serge dress and I will go to the hospitals and nurse the sick patriots."

"Sister of Charity, is that it? No, no; you must take a more active part; you must stand in the tribune, and kindle the sacred fire in those who are not already burning with the religion of the Revolution. Already I can feel the fire of your words." And he drew nearer to her.

"It is settled, then, *citoyen*, is it not? You will give the order for my release? We will start this evening for Spain, and you shall never hear of me again."

Tallien's face fell.

"Well! you take everything for granted," he said. "I am glad to see that if ever you become powerful favours will fall from your hands as if by miracle."

"I only care for power for the sake of mercy," she replied. "But now I am not appealing to your clemency, but to your justice."

"Justice belongs to the people," replied Tallien, coldly.

The Marquise felt that she had gone too far.

"It is a mistake," she exclaimed. "If I appealed to justice it would be too slow; but the beauty of clemency is that it is quick."

And she threw herself upon her knees before him.

"Rise, Madame!" exclaimed the young pro-consul. "I risk my head in this, but what does it matter? You are free."

And he clasped her in his arms.

At this moment the gaoler returned, accompanied by the *aide-de-camp* for whom Tallien had sent.

"*Adieu, citoyenne,*" said Tallien, resuming his official manner. "My *aide-de-camp* will go at once to the revolutionary tribunal, while I myself explain to the *Comité* the error of which you are the victim."

He signed to the gaoler, who conducted Mme. de Fontenay back to her cell; and then sat down to write to Robespierre.

"Every one betrays the Republic. The *citoyen* Tallien is granting pardon to aristocrats."¹

¹ The whole account of the arrest of Mme. de Fontenay and the interview with Tallien is taken from "Notre Dame de Thermidor," by M. Arsène Houssaye, who derived his information from her children, her letters, and other writings.

CHAPTER IV

Divorced—M. de Fontenay escapes to Spain—The mistress of Tallien—Her influence and his saves many lives—Robespierre—Singular circumstances at the birth of Louis XVII.—The vengeance of the Marquis de — —Enmity of Robespierre—Arrest of Térésia—La Force.

THE next day was the divorce. M. de Fontenay hurried away towards the Pyrenees and disappeared from France and from the life and concerns of the woman who had been his wife.

And Térésia, released from a marriage she had long disliked and to which no principle of duty or religion bound her, although she could scarcely be called free, fulfilled the conditions and accepted the part offered her willingly enough. She loved Tallien, who worshipped her with a passionate adoration which, far from concealing, they gloried in proclaiming.

Térésia became a power in Bordeaux. She appeared everywhere in public wearing those scanty Greek draperies so well calculated to display the perfection of her beauty ; affecting the attitude of the Goddess of Liberty, with a pike in one hand and the other resting upon the shoulder of Tallien.

The populace cheered as she drove about Bordeaux in a magnificent carriage which, had it belonged to a royalist, would have excited their rage. She harangued the Convention with bombastic speeches about women and virtue and modesty, which, to persons not besotted with frantic republicanism, must appear singularly out of place; mingling her exhortations with flattery so fulsome and preposterous that she did not fail to command sympathetic acclamations, especially when she said that she was not twenty years old and that she was a mother but no longer a wife.

Over the whole proceedings of Tallien and Térézia there was, in fact, an atmosphere and tone that can be best described as "flash"; for no other word seems to be so thoroughly characteristic of themselves, their friends, their sentiments, their speech, and their lives at this time.

That Térézia was infinitely superior to her lover was not only shown by the progress of years and events, but was obvious in the early days of her *liaison* with Tallien. For her speeches in public and private were not merely empty bombastic talk. She really did everything in her power to rescue from danger and help in trouble the unfortunate people with whom she was surrounded. For she hated cruelty and bloodshed, and saw no reason or excuse for it; in spite of the sophisms and theories of her republican friends. It made no difference to her to what party or class they belonged; she would help any one who was in trouble and appealed to her. And her power was immense, for Tallien, who held life and death in his hands, was her slave, and

even the savage Lacombe and Ysabeau, his colleagues, bowed before the charm of her influence.

The *Comité de salut public* was composed of Barère, Carnot, Couthon, Billaud-Varennes, Collot-d'Herbois, Robert Lindet, Prieur, Jean-Bon Saint-André, Saint-Just, and Maximilian Robespierre; as bloodthirsty a gang of miscreants as ever held an unfortunate country in their grip.

Of these ruffians the most powerful and influential was Robespierre, who, though cruel, treacherous, and remorseless, was severely moral and abstemious, and whose anger was deeply aroused by the reports he received from Bordeaux.

The life of luxurious splendour and open scandal Tallien led with his mistress irritated him nearly as much as the escape of the victims so frequently spared by his mercy, or rather by the all-powerful influence of the woman to whom all Bordeaux now looked for help and protection; besides which the popularity they both enjoyed at Bordeaux excited his jealous uneasiness.

But he did not at that time recall him to Paris, preferring that he should be a satrap at Bordeaux rather than a conspirator in the Convention; and remarking contemptuously—

“Those sort of men are of no use except to revive vices. They inoculate the people with the licentiousness of the aristocracy. But patience; we will deliver the people from their corrupters, as we have delivered them from their tyrants.”¹

By caresses, by tyranny, by stratagems, Térésia opened prison doors, obtained pardons, delivered

¹ “*Histoire des Girondins*,” t. 7, p. 266 (Lamartine).

victims from the guillotine. Immense numbers of people were saved by her exertions. Several times her influence dissolved the Revolutionary Committee; under her reign people began to breathe freely at Bordeaux, and the Terror for a time seemed nearly at an end.

Horrified at the *hôtel* of Tallien being in the *place de l'Échafaud*, she exclaimed—

“I will not come here again!”

“Well, I will come and live at your *hôtel*.”

“No, I shall come back here. It is not you who will go away, it is the scaffold.”

To divert his thoughts and attention from the rigours and cruelties, for the perpetration of which he had been sent to Bordeaux, she persuaded him to have his portrait done, and induced him and the artist to prolong the sittings on pretence of making the picture a *chef d'œuvre*, but in reality to occupy his time and attention; in fact, he was found by some one who called to see him reclining comfortably in a boudoir, dividing his attention between the artist who was painting the portrait and Térézia, who was also present.

The Marquis de Paroy, a royalist, whose father, a Girondist, had just been arrested, wrote to ask for an interview, sending an illustrated petition, in the taste of the day, to the “goddess of Bordeaux,” with a Cupid he called a *sans-culotte*, &c. Having received an invitation, he went to her house, where, in the ante-rooms, crowds were waiting with petitions in their hands. Presently folding doors were thrown open and Térézia appeared, exquisitely dressed, asked for the *citoyen* Paroy, and invited

him to come into her boudoir, which was filled with the traces of her pursuits. Music was upon the open piano, a guitar lay upon a sofa, a harp stood in a corner of the room, an easel, a half-sketched-out miniature, a table covered with drawings, colours, and brushes, an embroidery frame, a writing table piled with petitions, notes, and papers. After the first greeting she said—

“I think I remember meeting you at the house of the Comte de l’Estaing with my father, and I hope you will come and see me as often as you can. But let us speak of your father. Where is he in prison? I hope to obtain his release from the *citoyen Tallien*. I will give him your petition myself, and present you to him.”

She did so on the following day, and Tallien advised him to wait.

“Your father must be a little forgotten in order to save him. It all depends on the president of the tribunal, Lacombe.”

Térèzia asked him to supper to meet the mistress of Ysabeau, whom she thought might influence Ysabeau in his favour. During the supper one of the revolutionary guests, observing a ring with a Love painted on it, and the inscription—

“Qui que tu sois, voilà ton maître
Il l’est, le fut, ou bien doit l’être,”

kissed the ring, and handed it round to be kissed by all the rest, who little supposed that it was a portrait of the unfortunate Louis XVII.

The breathing time given to unhappy Bordeaux

came to an end. Tallien was recalled, and his place filled by the ferocious Jullien.

But his position at Paris was too powerful and his friends too numerous to allow him to be at once attacked with impunity. It was T  r  zia who was to be the first victim. Robespierre dreaded her influence, her talents, her popularity, her opinions, and the assistance and support she was to Tallien.

The crimes and horrors of the Revolution had now reached their climax. Paris was a scene of blood and terror. No one's life was safe for an hour, houses were closed, the streets, once so full of life and gaiety, were now paraded by gangs of drunken ruffians, men and women, bent on murder and plunder, or re-echoed to the roll of the tumbrils carrying victims to the scaffold. The prisons were crammed, and yet arrests went on every day. The King, the Queen, and the gentle, saintly Madame Elizabeth, had been murdered; the unfortunate Dauphin, now Louis XVII., and his sister were kept in cruel captivity.

It had been remarked that at the moment of the birth of this most unfortunate of princes, the crown which was an ornament on the Queen's bed fell to the ground, which superstitious persons looked upon as a bad omen.

Still more strange was the incident related by his uncle, the Comte de Provence, heir presumptive to the crown, which he afterwards wore. It happened immediately after the birth of the first Dauphin, elder brother of Louis XVII., whose early death saved him from the fate of his family.

“The same evening I found on my table a

letter carefully enclosed in a double envelope, addressed—

“‘POUR MONSIEUR SEUL.’

“I inquired in what manner the letter had arrived there, but all those in my service declared they knew nothing about it.

“When I was alone I opened the mysterious letter, and by the light of my lamp I read as follows :—

“‘Console yourself. I have just cast the horoscope of the child now born. He will not deprive you of the crown. He will not live when his father ceases to reign. Another than you, however, will succeed Louis XVI.; but, nevertheless, you will one day be King of France. Woe to him who will be in your place. Rejoice that you are without posterity; the existence of your sons would be threatened with too great calamities, for your family will drink to the dregs the most bitter contents of the cup of Destiny. Adieu! Tremble for your life if you try to discover me.—I am

“‘DEATH.’

“I got up and made a copy of this letter . . . but on fixing my eyes on the letters in white ink on black paper . . . I saw them disappear. I recognised in this phenomenon a chemical preparation by which the mysterious characters would become absorbed after a certain time.”¹

¹ “Mémoires de Louis XVIII.,” t. ii., pp. 275-7

No trace was ever found of the person who wrote or conveyed the letter.

It is easy to see that the present state of affairs in France offered the most dangerous and the strongest temptation to private vengeance. Any one who had an enemy or who had been offended by any one else, or even who wished to remove some person whose existence was inconvenient to them, had only to "denounce" them for some trifle which they might or might not have said or done; they were sure to be arrested, and most likely to be put to death.

The following story is an example of the kind.

The Marquis de —, a proud, stern man of a reserved and apparently cold temperament, had a young wife whom he adored. Their married life went on prosperously for some years, at the end of which the young Marquise was seized with a fatal illness. When on her death-bed she confessed to her husband, who was nearly frantic with grief, that she had once, several years since, been unfaithful to him, that remorse in consequence had poisoned her happiness, and that she could not die in peace without his forgiveness. The Marquis consented to pardon her fault on condition that she would tell him the name of her seducer, which she did, after having extorted from her husband a solemn promise that he would not challenge him to a duel, as she feared the blood of one or the other might rest upon her soul.

After her death the Marquis, who had no intention of either breaking his oath or foregoing his

vengeance, shut up his *château* and went to Paris, though it was in the height of the Terror ; for he had heard that his enemy was there, and was resolved to find him. He was a cousin of the young Marquise, the Chevalier de —, who had in the early days of their marriage stayed a good deal at the *château* of the Marquis de —, and had requited the unsuspecting trust and hospitality of his host by making love to his wife. Then, influenced by the remorse and entreaties of the Marquise, he had gone to Paris, and not been heard of for some time, but was believed to be living there in concealment.

The death of his wife and the revelation she had made to him, plunged the Marquis de — into such a fearful state that at first his reason was almost overcome ; and as he gradually recovered his self-possession the idea occurred to him to take advantage for his own purposes of the rumour circulated, that grief for the loss of his wife had affected his reason.

Accordingly he pretended to be mad, and wandered all day about the streets of Paris, wearing an old Court dress and an enormous wig, talking extravagantly, making foolish jokes, but all the time looking for the Chevalier —.

His plan succeeded perfectly. He was soon well known to the police as an ex-noble driven mad by the death of his wife, and being considered harmless, was allowed to go where he pleased unmolested.

It was the only safeguard he could have found, as his rank and well-known opinions would have otherwise marked him for destruction.

At last, one day in the *rue St. Honoré*, he came suddenly face to face with his enemy, disguised as a workman.

Rushing to him, he threw his arms round his neck, exclaiming—

“Eh ! how are you, *mon ami* ? I am delighted to see you, my dear Chevalier de——”

The Chevalier tried in vain to escape. The apparent madman seized him by the arm.

“Let me go !” he cried. “You are mistaken. I don’t know you.”

“You don’t remember me ? Your friend, your relation, the Marquis —— ?”

“Yes, I remember you now ; but let me go.”

A crowd began to gather, and he went on in a loud voice—

“I recognised you directly in spite of your dress, your beard, your dyed hair, and false scar.”

“Do you wish me to be lost ?”

“Lost ? Certainly not. I have only just found you, and shall not let you go. I am going to take you to dine with me, my dear Chevalier de ——”

“Speak lower,” implored the Chevalier. “Are you mad ?”

“Ah ! you, too, call me mad. It is an insult !”

The Chevalier tore away his arm, the Marquis struck him a furious blow, the police interfered, and took them both to the *Commissaire de la section*. The Marquis was released and the Chevalier —— sent to the Luxembourg.

His friends, hearing of his arrest, organised a plot for his release, established communications with him, and so skilfully arranged that one morning the

Chevalier de —— left the Luxembourg disguised as a soldier, passed into the streets, and thought he was saved.

But his enemy stood before him with a smile of triumph.

“Again that wretched madman !” muttered the Chevalier. “Is it God’s justice that puts him always in my way to destroy me ?”

“I am enchanted to see you again, my dear Chevalier de ——, and I hope you are in a better humour to-day. Instead of the dinner you refused, accept the *déjeuner* I offer you this morning.”

“For God’s sake, hold your tongue and let me pass,” said the Chevalier in a low voice. “My life depends upon it. Do you hear? do you understand? I have just escaped from prison; I am condemned to death. If you hold your tongue and let me pass I am saved, but if you keep me and call out my name you will kill me.”

“What the devil of a story are you telling me, Chevalier de —— ?” cried his tormentor. “Where did you have supper last night? I believe you have drunk too much.”

“Come, Marquis, try to have a spark of reason. It is my life I ask of you—my life.”

“*Parbleu*, let us live merrily ! that is my motto ; and let us begin by breakfasting. At any rate, I shall not leave you. Where you go I shall follow, if you run I shall run after you, calling out, ‘ Let us go to breakfast, Chevalier de —— ’ ”

Seeing that attention was being attracted to them, the Chevalier in despair put his arm into that of the Marquis, saying—

“Very well, let us go to breakfast then, but keep quiet, I beseech you. Not that way,” as his companion turned towards the Luxembourg.

“Yes, yes! I know the way to the restaurant!” and as he dragged him along in an iron grasp some guards, who had discovered the escape of the prisoner, recognised and seized him.

The Chevalier was taken back to his cell, and, knowing that he had now only a few hours to live, he made his will and wrote the history of this terrible adventure, saying that he could not but forgive the Marquis as he was mad. These papers he confided to a fellow prisoner, and a few hours later was summoned to execution with a number of others.

As the fatal car passed through the streets, for the third time his relentless enemy stood before him, and as a slight delay stopped the car close to him, he called out—

“Ah! Chevalier de ——, where are you going in that carriage? Perhaps to see your mistress, the Marquise de ——?” and the look of triumph and hatred revealed the truth to the victim of his vengeance.

It was dearly bought, however. For some time, for prudence sake, the Marquis kept up his pretence of madness, but after the fall of Robespierre and the Terror he resumed the apparent use of his reason. But the next heir had taken possession of the estates of the family in consequence of the declared madness of its head. The Marquis appealed to the law, but his own notoriety and the last will and letter of the Chevalier —— decided the case against him. He was shut up in the asylum of Charenton, where

he lived for many years, resigning himself after a time to his fate, and dying in extreme old age.

Not many days after the Convention had applauded with enthusiasm an extravagant speech about charity, full of absurdities and bombastic sentimentalities, made by Térésia, Robespierre demanded her arrest of the *Comité de salut public*.

It has been said that the arrest was made at the end of a *fête* she had been giving at which Robespierre himself was present, and which he had only just left, with professions of the sincerest friendship.

The incident accords so well with the habitual treachery of Robespierre, that if not true it may be called *ben trovato*; but in fact it is not really certain that it took place.

But it is confidently affirmed that Robespierre pursued Térésia, with even more than his usual vindictiveness. He begged the Marquis de la Valette, a *ci-desant* noble and yet a friend of his, to prevent the escape of this young woman whom they both knew, "for the safety of the Republic." But M. de la Valette, although he was not ashamed so far to degrade himself as to be the friend of Robespierre, shrank from being the instrument of this infamy; and not only warned Térésia but offered her the shelter of his roof, which, for some reason or other, she declined. She was arrested and sent to La Force, one of the worst prisons of the Revolution, with the additional horror of being *au secret*. She had too many and too powerful friends to be sacrificed without difficulty and risk, and it was, in fact, his attack upon her that gave



MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE

the finishing blow to the tottering tyranny of Robespierre.

Robespierre sent Coffinhal, one of his tools, to question her, and she was offered her liberty if she would denounce Tallien, which she indignantly refused to do. Far more than in her former experience at Bordeaux, did she feel that she was already condemned. For then she had only to dread the general cruelty of the Revolutionists, whose rage was certainly excited by the escape of their prey, but who had, beyond doubt, no personal spite against her.

But now she had an enemy, powerful, vindictive, remorseless, and bent upon her destruction. His object was that her trial should take place the next day; but her friends were watching her interests. M. de la Valette and M. Verdun managed to prevent this, and next day a friend of Tallien, meeting him wandering in desperation about the *Champs-Elysées*, said to him—

“You have nothing to fear for the *citoyenne* Cabarrus; she will not be brought before the tribunal to-day either.”

To gain time in those days was often to gain everything.

In the horrible dungeon in which Térézia was shut up, she could receive no communications from without; but after a day or two she was told by the gaoler that she had leave to go down into the courtyard in the evening, after the lights were out. To whom she owed this consolation she was not told, but the first evening as she stood enjoying the fresh air, a stone fell at her feet, and on picking it up she

found a paper with writing fastened to it. As she could not see to read it by the light of the moon, she had to wait till after sunrise next morning, and then, although the writing was disguised, she recognised the hand of Tallien as she read these words—

“I am watching over you ; every evening at nine you will go down to the courtyard. I shall be near you.”

She tried to question the gaoler when he brought her breakfast of black bread and boiled beans, but he only put his finger on his lips. Every evening she went down to the courtyard and a stone with a note from Tallien was thrown to her. He had hired an attic close by, and his mother had, under another name, gained the gaoler and his wife. But at the end of a week the gaoler was denounced by the spies of Robespierre, and Térézia transferred to the Carmes.

CHAPTER V

The Bastille—Prisons of the Revolution—Les Carmes—Cazotte—The Terrorists turn upon each other—Joséphine de Beauharnais—A musician in the Conciergerie—A dog in prison—Under the guardianship of a dog—Tallien tries to save Térésia—A dagger—La Force—The last hope—The Tocsin—The 9th Thermidor.

VOLUMES of denunciation, torrents of execration have been and are still poured forth against the Bastille, the tyranny and cruelty it represented, the vast number and terrible fate of the prisoners confined there and the arbitrary, irresponsible power of which it was the instrument.

Many of the stories told and assertions made upon the subject are absolutely false, others greatly exaggerated; although nobody who has ever studied the history of any country would imagine that any prison ever existed anywhere, until within the last few years, without a record of crime, oppression, and cruelty.

When the Bastille was destroyed, and the officers who were accused of nothing but defending the post entrusted to them were murdered, that prison

contained seven prisoners, of whom one was detained by the request of his family, four were forgers, one was an idiot, the other unknown.¹

Three years later, under the rule of the apostles of liberty, fraternity, and equality, there were thousands of prisons of the State crammed with prisoners, besides the supplementary prisons hastily arranged in the ancient convents, palaces, and colleges of Paris.

The hardships and horrors of these prisons, though always terrible, were much worse in some than in others. Far the best were the Luxembourg, Portroyal, then called *Port Libre*, the convents of the *Bénédictins anglais*, the convents *des Oiseaux* and *des Anglaises*, and one or two others, which, in the slang of the day, were called *prisons muscadines*.² There were congregated most of the prisoners of rank and refinement, although in most of the prisons there was a mixture of classes and opinions. There the food and accommodation was much better and the officials more civil, or rather, less brutal, and for a long time the prisoners were allowed to go into the gardens, orchards, avenues, and courts belonging to them, also to amuse themselves together until a certain hour of the night.

At this time, however, everything even in these prisons had become much worse,³ the restrictions were severe, the number executed far greater, the

¹ De Cassagnac, "Histoire du Directoire."

² A slang word of the time for aristocrat, dandy, *élégant*.

³ It was six weeks before the 9th Thermidor, the day of deliverance, that these restrictions and hardships were increased.

gaolers more brutal, and the perils and horrors of those awful dwellings more unheard of.

The Carmes was one of the bad ones, as regards accommodation, but in it were many prisoners belonging to good society, delicate, refined, bearing bravely the privations and dangers of their lot. It was supposed to be one of the aristocratic prisons, though less comfortable than the rest.

If Térézia had been in immediate danger she would have been sent to the Conciergerie, which was looked upon as the gate of the guillotine; and she knew that the important thing was to gain time. Many had thus been saved; amongst others Mlle. de Montansier, formerly directress of a theatre. She was imprisoned in the Abbaye, and was condemned with a number of others to be guillotined on the following day.

But she was so ill that she could not stand, and as she lay delirious upon her pallet in a high fever, one of her fellow prisoners called to M. Cazotte, who was also imprisoned there, and was famous for having predicted many things which had always come true, especially for his prophecy at the notorious supper of the Prince de Beauvan, at which he had foretold the horrors of the Revolution and the fate of the different guests, now being, or having been, terribly fulfilled.¹

“Well, Cazotte,” said the other, “here, if ever, is a case for you to call your spirit up and ask him if

¹ The story of this supper is given in “A Leader of Society at Napoleon’s Court” (Bearne), and in the Memoirs of La Harpe, the Comtesse d’Adhémar, and others who were present at it.

that poor dying creature will have strength to mount the horrible machine to-morrow."

He spoke half jokingly, but Cazotte saw no joke at all, but went into a corner without speaking, turned his face to the wall, and remained there in silence for a quarter of an hour, after which he came back with a joyful look.

"*La brave fille* will not be guillotined at all," he said, "for I have just seen her die in her bed at an advanced age."

All laughed at the vision, but the next day she was so ill that her execution was put off, she continued to be so ill that she could not be moved and was forgotten till the 9th Thermidor came and she was saved. She died, as Cazotte had predicted, in her own bed at a great age.

Cazotte himself, after being saved by his daughter from the massacre, was re-arrested as he always foretold. His friends asked in vain why he did not hide, escape, save himself; he only replied—

"What is the use, if my hour has come?"

He was executed as he foretold.

Térèzia was much better off at the Carmes, for she was no longer *au secret*, but mixed in the day with the rest of the prisoners and shared a cell at night with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and Joséphine Vicomtesse de Beauharnais, whose husband, a revolutionary general and a thoroughly contemptible character, had lately been guillotined by his republican friends.

For the only consolation was that now the monsters were turning on each other; there were, in fact, more republicans than royalists in the

prisons. Every now and then some blood-stained miscreant was brought in amongst those whose homes he had wrecked, whose dear ones he had murdered, and whose fate he was now to share; while all shrunk in horror from him, or mocked and triumphed as he passed. When Chaumette, the high priest of the Revolution, one of the most blasphemous and blood-stained wretches of all, was brought to the Luxembourg, the prisoners would look through the little *guichet* where he was shut up, asking each other, "Have you seen the wolf?"

When Manuel, one of the authors of the September massacres, was taken to the Conciergerie and stood before the tribunal, a group of prisoners standing by, regardless of the *gendarmes*, pushed him against a pillar, still stained with the blood shed on that fearful day, with cries of "See the blood you shed,"[†] and through applause and "bravos" he passed to his doom.

In the cell of Térézia and her companions had been massacred a number of priests on that occasion, and still upon its wall were the *silhouettes* marked in blood, where two of the murderers had rested their swords.

And yet amidst all the horrors and miseries even of the six last and most awful weeks of the Terror, in daily peril of death and amongst the most frightful hardships, laughter and jokes were heard in the prisons, friendships and love affairs were formed; every one was the friend of every one.

Those who were going to their death, dined

[†] "Prisons de Paris" (Dauban).

cheerfully for the last time with their companions, and bade them a brave and cheerful farewell.

A young musician, waiting at the Conciergerie for the *gendarmes* to take him to the tribunal which was his death sentence, remembering that a friend wanted a certain air, went back to his room, copied it, and took it to his friend, saying—

“*Mon cher*, here is what you wanted; the music is all right, I have just tried it on my flute. I am sorry not to be able to get you some more; I shall not be alive to-morrow.”¹

There were a thousand prisoners in the Luxembourg alone, and strange romances, thrilling escapes, fearful tragedies, and touching stories could indeed be told of what passed within the walls of those gloomy prisons.

Mme. de la Chabaussière was imprisoned at Port Libre, and her dog stayed with her all the time, her only comfort. He was well-known and a favourite in the prison, he knew all the gaolers and officials, and which of them were kind to his mistress. Of these he was very fond; but those who were not good to her he flew at, biting their legs and fighting with their dogs. However, all the officials liked him and let him stay during the whole time she was imprisoned. When the gaoler came to open the door of her cell he jumped up and licked his hands; when she walked, as at Port Libre they could, in the cloisters and gardens, he went with her; when she came back he rushed in and hid himself in her cell.

Port Libre was a large building—several build-

¹ “*Mémoires sur les Prisons.*”

ings, in fact—with great corridors warmed by stoves ; many of the rooms had fireplaces and there was a great *salon* where the richer prisoners dined. In the evening there were concerts, games, lectures, &c., or people read, wrote, and worked. Collections were made to pay for wood, lights, stores, extra furniture, water—the richer paid for the poorer. Every one brought their own lights and sat round a great table ; a few *sans-culottes* were there, but the society for the most part was extremely good. Little suppers were given by different prisoners to their friend, better food could be got by paying, also books, letters, parcels, and newspapers. At 9 p.m. was the *appel*, but they might afterward return to the *salon*, meet in each other's rooms, or even get leave from the *concièrge* to visit their friends in the other buildings. Outside were three walks : the garden, the cloisters, and the *cour de l'accacia*, with palisades and a seat of grass under a great accacia. Often they sat out till eleven at night, and those whose rooms were close by sometimes spent the whole night out of doors.

This was one of the best prisons, but during the six weeks before Thermidor even this was much changed for the worse, brutal ruffians taking the place of milder gaolers, and food unfit to eat being supplied.

Many heroic people, women especially, managed to get stolen interviews with those belonging to them shut up in the different prisons. Mme. de Beuguot used to visit her husband disguised as a washer-woman, and through her devotion, courage, and good management he was ultimately saved. Some

bribed or persuaded the more humane gaolers, and one man was visited through all his imprisonment by his two little children who came with no other guardian than their large dog. The faithful creature brought them safe there and back every day, watching carefully that they were not run over.

The prison of the Carmes was a very different abode to Port Libre, and it was just at its worst time, but still Térézia used afterwards to declare that she, after a time, got accustomed to the horrors of the prison. The constant presence of death made them more and more callous, and they would play games together like children, even enacting the scenes of execution which they had every prospect of going through in reality. Their room, or cell, looked out into the garden, through a grating, into which, however, they could not go; a single mattress in a corner served for their bed.

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon had obtained leave to have a thimble, needles, and scissors, with which she worked. Joséphine read and worked; Térézia told stories and sang.

The hand of Charlotte Corday had sent Marat to his own place; Danton and Camille Desmoulins, beginning to have some slight glimmerings of mercy and humanity, had been denounced and executed; Robespierre was still triumphant, with his friends and satellites, Couthon, St.-Just and David. With them and Foulquièr-Tinville, Paris was like hell upon earth. Long lists of victims, numbers of whom were women, went every day to the guillotine; the populace were getting weary of blood and slaughter. Again Tallien



GEORGES DANTON

To face page 330

made an attempt to get the release of T  r  zia, even suggesting that it was time to stop the murder of women. Even David agreed; but Robespierre was inexorable.

On the morning of the 4th Thermidor a dagger had been mysteriously sent to Tallien, without a word of explanation. No one knew who had brought it; there it was upon his table. But he knew the dagger, and what it meant. It was a Spanish poignard which belonged to T  r  zia. It was then that he went and made his last and useless appeal to Robespierre. T  r  zia had again been removed to La Force, and on the 7th Thermidor he received a letter from her.

“*La citoyenne* Fontenay to the *citoyen* Tallien, *rue de la Perle*, 17.

“The *administrateur de police* has just left; he has been to tell me that to-morrow I go to the tribunal, which means to the scaffold. It is indeed unlike the dream I had last night, that Robespierre was dead and the prisons open; but thanks to your incredible cowardice, there will soon be nobody left in France capable of realising it.”

He answered immediately—

“Have as much prudence as I will have courage, but calm your head.”

Then he went to find Barras and Fr  ron.

But T  r  zia had nearly lost all hope. She had waited and waited, always expecting help—for Tallien was powerful among the leaders of the government. But when she was taken from the Carmes back to La Force, she knew that her time had come, and now the gaoler had told her that it

was not worth while to make her bed, as it was to be given to another.

With anguish she saw one cartload of prisoners leave, and she trembled every moment lest she should hear the sound of the wheels of a second in the courtyard of the prison.

But the next day passed and she was not called for. All day she waited in a feverish, terrible suspense that can well be imagined ; night came and she was still spared. Morning dawned, the morning of the 9th Thermidor. The weather was frightfully oppressive, and in all the prisons in Paris they were stifling from the heat, for the late cruel restrictions had put an end, even in the more indulgent prisons, to the possibility of walks in garden or cloister and the chance of fresh air. But as the long, weary day wore on, there seemed to be some change approaching ; there was an uneasy feeling about, for there had lately been rumours of another massacre in the prisons, and the prisoners, this time resolving to sell their lives dearly, had been agreeing upon and arranging what little defence they could make. Some planned a barricade made of their beds, others examined the furniture with a view to breaking it up into clubs, a few brought carefully out knives they had managed to conceal in holes and corners from the prison officials, some filled their pockets with cinders and ashes to fling in the faces of their assailants, and so escape in the confusion, while others, republicans and atheists, felt for the *cabanis*, a poison they carried about them, and assured themselves that it was all safe and ready for use.

They waited and listened. There was certainly more noise in the streets, something was evidently going on ; but there was no attack upon any of the prisons ; on the contrary, it was the gaolers who were undoubtedly alarmed. Their whole tone and manner changed from brutal insolence to civility and indulgence. When evening approached they were running about from one room to another with looks of dismay, while the terror of the prison spies was uncontrolled.

In the Luxembourg, between six and seven in the evening, a prisoner whose room was at the top of the palace came down and said that he heard the tocsin. In breathless silence all listened, and recognised that fearful sound. Drums were beating, the noise and tumult grew louder and nearer, but whether it meant life or death to them they could not tell ; only the discouraged and anxious demeanour of the officials gave them hope. In spite of the opposition of the gaolers several of them rushed up the stairs and got out on the roof to see what was going on. In the *rue Tournon* they saw an immense crowd with a carriage in the midst, which by the clamour around it they knew must contain some important person. It stopped before the Luxembourg, the name of Robespierre was spoken ; it was sent on with him to the Maison Commune.

The clamour died away ; all night reassuring proclamations were heard about the streets.

The next morning all was changed. The cringing, officious, timid civility of their tyrants left but little doubt in their minds. They clasped each other's

hands, even then not daring to speak openly or show their joy, until the news, first a whisper, then a certainty, assured them that Robespierre was dead.

Then Térésia knew that she was safe, and that Tallien, for her sake, had overthrown the monster and broken the neck of the Terror. Soon he appeared in triumph to throw open the gates of La Force, and the following day Térésia, accompanied by Fréron and Melun de Thionville, went herself to the club of the Jacobins and closed it without any one venturing to take the keys from her.

When Pitt heard of it he remarked, "That woman is capable of closing the gates of hell."

CHAPTER VI

“Robespierre is dead !”—Notre Dame de Thermidor—End of the Terror—The prisons open—Decline of Tallien's power—Barras—Napoleon—“Notre Dame de Septembre !”—M. Ouvrard—Separates from Tallien—He goes to Egypt—Consul in Spain—Dies in Paris—Térèzia stays in Paris—Ingratitude of some she had saved—Marries the Prince de Chimay—Conclusion.

ROBESPIERRE was dead, and Tallien, for the time, reigned in his stead ; and with him and over him, Térèzia, or, as she may be called, Mme. Tallien, for although Tallien before spoke of her as his wife, it was only after the 9th Thermidor that some sort of marriage ceremony was performed. But the name she now received, amongst the acclamation of the populace, was “Notre Dame de Thermidor.” For it was she who had brought about the deliverance of that day ; for her and by her the Terror had been broken up ; and although the *Thermidoriens*, led by Tallien, Barras and Fréron, had re-established or continued the *Comité de Salut Public*, the greater number of the blood-stained tyrants who ruled the Revolution still remained, and many horrors and tyrannies for some time longer went on ; still there was at once an enormous difference. The revolutionary gang had, of course,

not altered its nature, those of whom it was composed were the same, cruel, remorseless, and steeped in crimes; but however much they wished it they could not continue to carry on the terrorism against which the anger of the populace was now aroused.

The people had had enough; they were tired of blood and murder. Even before Thermidor they had begun to murmur as the cars of victims passed through the streets; a reaction had begun.

The prisons were thrown open, the *Directoire* was far milder than the *Convention*, pardons were obtained in numbers, especially by Térézia, who, when she could not succeed in saving persons in danger in any other way, had often risked her own safety to help and conceal them.

Paris seemed to be awaking into life again; the streets were more animated, the people to be seen in them were more numerous and did not all look either brutal or terror-stricken. Art, literature, and social gaiety began to revive.

One of the odious, inevitable republican *fêtes* was, of course, given to celebrate the events of Thermidor. Mme. Tallien opened a *salon*, where, as in the others then existing, the strange, uncouth figures of the *sans-culottes* mingled with others whose appearance and manners showed that they were renegades and traitors to their own order and blood.

Conspicuous amongst these was Barras, who, though his hands were deeply dyed in the blood of the Terror, belonged to one of the noblest families in Provence.

"*Noble comme un Barras*," was, in fact, a common saying of the country.

His was the leading *salon* of Paris at that time, and Mme. Tallien was the presiding genius there. Music, dancing, and gambling were again the rage, the women called themselves by mythological names and wore costumes so scanty and transparent that they were scarcely any use either for warmth or decency; marriages, celebrated by a civic functionary, were not considered binding, and were frequently and quickly followed by divorce. Society, if such it could be called, was a wild revel of disorder, licence, debauchery, and corruption; while over all hung, like a cloud, the gloomy figures of Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, and their Jacobin followers, ready at any moment to bring back the Terror.

So it was on a volcano that they feasted and sang and danced and made love, and Térèzia was the life and soul of the pandemonium which had taken the place of the graceful, polished, cultivated society of the *ancien régime*.

Her first care had been to release from the Carmes her fellow-prisoners, Joséphine de Beauharnais and Mme. d'Aiguillon, who now formed an intimate part of her society and that of Barras. To them also came Mme. de Stael, wife of the Swedish Ambassador, the beautiful Mme. Regnault-de-Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Mme. Cambys, and many others thankful to escape from the shadows of prison and death to the light of liberty and pleasure. The restraints of religion and morality were, of course, non-existent; *liaisons* and

licence were the order of the day, and T er zia was not likely to be an exception to the general custom. She had, besides her daughter by Tallien, other children, who, as no other name belonged to them, were called Cabarrus. And her being or calling herself Tallien's wife was no reason why she should renounce her natural right to love any one else where, when, and as often as she pleased.

And Barras pleased her. His distinguished appearance and manners contrasted with those of her present surroundings, and recalled the days when she lived amongst people who were polite and well-bred, knew how to talk and eat and enter a drawing-room, and behave when they were in it; and who wore proper clothes and did not call each other "*citoyen*," or any other ridiculous names, and conversation was delightful, and scenes and memories of blood and horror unknown. It may well have been at this time that she began to yearn after that former existence she had been so rashly eager to throw away.

Her love for Tallien was beginning to wane. It had never been more than a mad passion, aroused by excitement, romance, and the strange circumstances which threw them into each other's way; and kept alive by vanity, interest, gratitude, and perhaps above all by success. She wanted Tallien to be a great power, a great man; and she was beginning to see that he was nothing of the sort. If, when Robespierre fell, instead of helping to set up a government composed of other men, he had seized the reins himself, she would have supported him heart and soul, shared his power, ambition,

and danger, and probably her admiration and pride might have preserved her love for him. But Tallien had not the power to play such a part; he had neither brains nor character to sway the minds of men and hold their wills in bondage to his own. And now he was in a position which in any line of life surely bars the way to success: he was neither one thing or the other.

Between him and the royalists were the September massacres, rivers of blood, crimes and blasphemies without end.

Between him and the Jacobins, the death of Robespierre and the destruction of the Montagne.

And he saw that his influence was declining and with it the love of the woman to whom he was still devoted.

Of course there were disputes and jealousies as time went on. It is of Tallien that is told the story of his complaint to his wife—

“Tu ne me tutoies plus !” and of her answer—

“Eh bien ! va-t-en.”

Their first house in Paris was a sort of imitation cottage, after the execrable taste of the day, in the *Champs-Élysées*, from which they moved into a *hôtel* in the *rue de la Victoire*, which was for some time the resort of all the chiefs of their political party, and the scene of constant contention between the Thermidoriens and the remnants of the Montagne. The discussions were generally political, and often violent; they would have been abhorrent to the well-bred society of former days.

Barras was the leading spirit in this society, and for some time he was at Térésia's feet. But if

Tallien was not a great man, neither was Barras ; amongst all the unscrupulous ruffians of the revolutionary party there did not appear to be one superior enough to his fellows to command or lead them.

And yet there was one : “ a young, pale, sickly-looking Italian,” who lived in a third-rate inn, wore a shabby uniform, and frequented the parties of Barras and the rest. He was not a conspicuous figure nor a particularly honoured guest ; his military career had been apparently ruined by the spite of his enemies ; he seemed to have no money, no connections, and no prospects. But in a few years all of them—all France and nearly all Europe—were at his feet, for it was Napoleon Buonaparte.

His career, however, was even now beginning ; and not long after Térésia, in the height of her beauty and power with Paris at her feet, rejected his love-making but accepted his friendship, he was sent to Italy and began the series of triumphs which were to raise him to the throne of France.

As time went on Térésia found that her influence as well as that of Tallien was rapidly declining. Her *salon* was not at all likely to last long. Those of the court and of society before the Revolution had been of an entirely different order ; held by women who, besides their beauty or other attractions, were in an assured position, surrounded by well-known connections and friends, forming an intimate society sure to be met at their houses, and always ready to carry on conversation, avoid all topics likely to give offence, and make themselves generally agreeable. Nobody was admitted there who



NAPOLEON

To face page 340

was not accustomed to the usages of the world or who would interfere with the harmony and general tone of the house. People went there, not to engage in political discussions or to make love to their hostess, but to spend a pleasant evening and meet the friends they knew and liked. These *salons* continued to be frequented by their usual guests year after year without any more change than the lapse of time inevitably brings.

Laure Permon, Duchesse d'Abbrantés, than whom no one was a better judge of these matters, observes—

“To ‘receive’ is to have an open house, where one can go every evening with the certainty of finding it lighted up and inhabited, the host ready to receive one with pleasure and courtesy. For that, it is not an absolute necessity to have a superior intellect, to descend from Charlemagne, or to possess two hundred thousand *livres de rentes*; but it is absolutely necessary to have knowledge of the world and cultivation, qualities which everybody does not possess.”

The sort of people who frequented the *salon* of Mme. Tallien had no such ideas. They were a miscellaneous horde collected from the most opposite sources, many of whom were strangers to each other or disliked and feared each other, and who went there for different reasons. When Tallien became less powerful her *salon* became less and less full; when men ceased to be in love with her they left off going there.

The infatuation of Barras for her began also to cool. He left off going to her as at one time to

consult her about everything. If he wished to see her, or she to see him, she must go to him at the Luxembourg.

And step by step she was drawing away from the Revolution. She had had enough of it, and she began to feel that disgust and horror were taking the place of the frantic admiration she had entertained for it in former years. And the finishing stroke was put by hearing herself called, as she walked with Tallien in *Cours la Reine* one evening, "*Notre Dame de Septembre.*"

Tallien heard it too, and it was like a blow to him. Do and say what he might, he could never shake off the stain of the September massacres, and time only increased the horror with which they were regarded.

The name, applied to Térézia, was a cruel injustice, and, with the ingratitude so often to be met with, now that she was less powerful and people were not in need of her protection, they forgot or neglected or slandered her, and that accursed name was frequently to be heard.

In her altered state of mind Tallien was associated with all the horrors she longed to forget, and she began to wish to free herself from a marriage which in her eyes was only a contract entered into for mutual convenience, to be ended when no longer desirable.

Tallien had saved her life twice, and she had given him her youth and beauty and fortune; she probably thought they were quits. Her connection with him had lasted five years, and now her passion both for him and for the Revolution had burnt

itself out, she was in all the splendour of her beauty and not more than five-and-twenty years old. Most of her life lay before her.

If she no longer cared for Barras nor he for her, there were plenty of others ready to worship her. M. Ouvrard, a millionaire who was under an obligation to her, heard her complain that she had no garden worth calling one. Some days later he called for her in his carriage, and took her to the door of a luxurious *hôtel* in the *rue de Babylone*. Giving her a gold key, he bade her open the door, and when she had given vent to her raptures over the sumptuous rooms and shady garden, he told her that her servants had already arrived; she was at home—all was hers.

Tallien had no wish to separate from Térézia. He cared more for her than she for him, but he saw that her love was gone; he had failed with her as with everything else. He submitted, and begged to be allowed to accompany Napoleon to Egypt, why, no one could understand, unless he feared he might share the fate of Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barère, and other of his regicide friends, meditating at Cayenne upon the result of the Revolution.¹

Térézia remained at Paris, which was soon transformed by the wonderful genius who rose to supreme power upon the ruins of the chimeras with which she and her friends had deluded themselves. The men of the Revolution, regicides and murderers, fled from the country. Napoleon was an enemy of a different kind from Louis XVI., and

¹ "Notre Dame de Thermidor," p. 456 (Arsene Houssaye).

he was now the idol of the people. His strong hand held the reins of government, his mighty genius dominated the nation and led their armies to victory; the fierce, unruly populace quailed before him. He scorned the mob and hated the Revolution.

“Saturday—of *Messidor!*” he exclaimed, when ordering the *Moniteur* to be dated on a certain day. “We shall be laughed at! But I will do away with the *Messidor!* I will efface all the inventions of the *Jacobins!*”¹

Barras fled to Brussels; Tallien, his part played out and his power and position gone, returned to France, the last link broken between him and Térésia. He did not wish for a divorce, but he was obliged to consent to one. And he had himself been one of its most fervent advocates.

Napoleon gave him a consulship at Alicante, where he spent some years. Before he went, Ouvrard offered him the cottage in the *Champs-Élysées* and a pension of twelve thousand francs, which he refused with indignation. He was again a journalist, and would live by his pen.

He returned to Paris when he left Spain, and lived there, poor, sickly, and forgotten by all but Térésia, then Princess de Chimay. She was nearly his only friend. She visited him often, and though he would never take money from her, she persuaded him to accept a refuge in the house in the *Champs-Élysées* called the *Chaumière*, their first dwelling in Paris.

For some years Térésia continued to live at Paris,

¹ “*Mémoires de Napoléon*” (Bourrienne).

where she had witnessed so many transformations and passed through the extremes of prosperity and adversity.

Many friends were about her ; her beauty and fascination were as remarkable as ever. From numbers of people she met with the affection and gratitude which, however they might deplore and disapprove of the laxity of her morals, no one who was not altogether contemptible would fail to render to a woman who had saved their life or the lives of those they loved.

Others there were who showed the basest ingratitude. The Marquise de — had been saved by Mme. Tallien, and hidden for three weeks in her boudoir. Not even her maid knew of her presence there. Térésia herself not only brought her food and waited upon her, but obtained her pardon and got part of her fortune restored to her. For some time she appeared very grateful, and as long as Tallien was powerful she came constantly to see Térésia, often asking for fresh favours.

When Tallien had fallen and Napoleon was supreme she ceased to go near her.

A man of her acquaintance, disgusted by her conduct, remarked one day—

“Mme. Tallien is indignant at your ingratitude ; she saved your life, and I advise you to go and see her.”

To which she replied, “*Comment donc !* I have a horror of ingratitude. Of course I intend to go and see her. I owe her a great deal, and I will prove it by doing so. But you understand that I am obliged to consider appearances for the sake of my

family, and her reputation forces me to show a reserve which I regret. If you will ask her when I shall find her alone I shall go and see her at once."

"Tell her," said Mme. Tallien, "that I am *désolée* not to be able to receive her, but I am never alone, because I am always surrounded by those to whom I have had the happiness to be of use."

✓ Mme. de Boufflers, Mme. de Sabran, and their families, on the other hand, were always assiduous in their attentions to her, and would refuse other invitations to go to her.

Joséphine, now the wife of Napoleon, and head of society in Paris, had not forgotten her, and was anxious to receive her at court, but this Napoleon would not allow, greatly to the disappointment and sorrow of them both.

Joséphine cried and entreated in vain, pointing out the ingratitude he was forcing her to display; but though he always retained his private friendship for Térésia, he told Joséphine that only respectable women could be received by the wife of the First Consul.

In 1805 she again married, and this time her husband was in every respect the incarnation of all that she had hitherto opposed and objected to.

A royalist, an *émigré*, a Prince; but the only man she never ceased to love, and of whom she said, "*He* was her true husband."

Joseph, Comte de Caraman, who soon after their marriage became Prince de Chimay, was the third son of the Duc de Caraman, Governor of Provence. He emigrated with the Princes, and, being an excellent musician, gained his living by his violin. He

established himself at Hamburg, and there gave lessons.

After the Revolution he returned with the other *émigrés*, and soon after received the inheritance of his uncle, the fourteenth Prince de Chimay, and of the Holy Roman Empire and Grandee of Spain.

They went to live at the ancient castle of Chimay,[†] where they led an intellectual and splendid life, surrounded by the great artists, musicians, and literary men of the day, and by many devoted friends. They spent their winters in Brussels, but a bitter drop in Térézia's cup of happiness was the absolute refusal of the King and Queen to receive her at court. The Prince, who was the King's Chamberlain, had to go without her.

He always adored her, saying she was the good genius of his house. They passed their lives happily together until her death, which took place at Chimay in January, 1835, surrounded by her children, whom she adored. They had several besides her former ones, whom she neither concealed nor separated from.

Tallien's daughter, one of whose names was "Thermidor," married a Narbonne-Pelet. Another daughter, the Marquise de Hallay, inherited her beauty, and was an extraordinary likeness of herself. One of her sons, Dr. Edouard Cabarrus, was with her amongst the rest when she died, and the last words she spoke to her children were in the soft caressing Spanish of her early youth.

[†] Chimay is in Belgium.

IV

MADAME DE GENLIS

CHAPTER I

Birth of Félicité Ducrest — Château de Saint-Aubin — Made *chanoinesse*—Story of her uncle and her mother—Her childhood—Comes to Paris—Goes into society—Evil reputation of the *hôtel Tencin*.

THE last of the four French heroines whose histories are here to be related, differed in her early surroundings and circumstances from the three preceding ones. She was neither the daughter of a powerful noble like the Marquise de Montagu, nor did she belong to the *finance* or the *bourgeoisie* like Mme. Le Brun and Mme. Tallien. Her father was noble but poor, her childhood was spent, not in a great capital but in the country, and as she was born nearly ten years before the first and six-and-twenty years before the last of the other three, she saw much more than they did of the old France before it was swept away by the Revolution.

Félicité Stéphanie Ducrest de Saint-Aubin was born January 25, 1746, at Champcéry, a small estate in Burgundy which belonged to her father, but which two years afterwards he sold, and bought the estate and *marquisat*¹ of Saint-Aubin on the Loire.

¹ An estate which carried a title with all the *seigneuriaux* rights.

The *château*, built close to the river, was large, picturesque, and dilapidated, with immense courtyards and crumbling towers ; on the opposite bank was the *Abbaye de Sept-Fonts*, where Félicité and her brother were often taken for a treat, crossing the Loire in a boat and dining in the guest-room of the abbey.

These children, of whom she was the elder by a year, were the only ones who survived of the four born to their parents, and were devotedly fond of each other ; the remembrance of their happy childhood together in the rambling old *château* and the great garden with its terrace over the Loire always remained vividly impressed upon the mind of Félicité.

They were in the habit of spending part of every summer at Étioles, with M. le Normand, *fermier général des postes*, husband of Mme. de Pompadour, then the mistress of Louis XV. After one of these visits, when Félicité was about six years old, it having been decided to obtain for her and for one of her little cousins admission into the order of *chanoinesses* of the Noble Chapter of Alix ; the two children with their mothers travelled in an immense travelling-carriage called a *berline*, to Lyon, where they were detained for a fortnight, during which the *Comtes de Lyon* examined the genealogical proofs of their noble descent. Finding them correct and sufficient for their admission into the order, they proceeded to Alix, at some distance from Lyon ; where, with the huge abbey and church in the centre were, grouped, in the form of a semi-circle, the tiny houses, each with its



Boucher

LA MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR

To face page 352

little garden, which were the dwellings of the *chanoinesses*.

On the day of the ceremony the children, dressed in white, were brought into the church, where the grand prior, after making them say the creed and answer certain questions, cut off a lock of their hair, tied a piece of black and white material on their heads, put a black silk girdle round their waists, and hung round their necks the red *cordons* and enamelled cross of the order. After a short exhortation, followed by high mass, the children were embraced by the *chanoinesses*, and the day ended with suitable festivities.

The *chanoinesses* all bore the title of Countess; that chosen for Félicité was Comtesse de Lancy, her father being Seigneur of Bourbon-Lancy.

The *chanoinesses* were free to take vows or not, either at the prescribed age or later. If they did not, they had only the honour of the title of Countess and the decorations of the order. If they did, they got one of the dwellings and a good pension, but they could not marry, and must spend two out of every three years there; with the other year they could do as they liked. They might also adopt as a niece a young *chanoinesse* on condition she always stayed with them and took the vows when she was the proper age. Her adopted aunt might leave her all her jewels, furniture, &c., as well as her little house and pension. One of them wished to adopt Félicité, but her mother would not consent. They stayed there six weeks and then went home, Félicité in despair at leaving the nuns,

who petted and loaded her with bonbons, but much consoled by being called "Madame."

They then returned to Lyon, where they parted company; Félicité's aunt and cousin returning to Paris, while she and her mother went back to Burgundy.

After a time a governess was engaged for her, a certain Mlle. de Mars, a young girl of sixteen, whose chief instruction was in music, in which she excelled, but beyond the catechism and a few elementary subjects, knew little or nothing. She was a gentle, devout, sweet-tempered girl, and Félicité soon became passionately attached to her, and as her mother, occupied with her own pursuits and paying and receiving visits, troubled herself very little about the studies of her daughter, the child was left almost entirely to Mlle. Mars and the maids, who, however, were trustworthy women and did her no harm, beyond filling her head with stories of ghosts with which the old *château* might well have been supposed to be haunted. M. de Saint-Aubin kept a pack of hounds, hunted or fished all day, and played the violin in the evening. He had been in the army, but had resigned his commission early in consequence of some foolish scrape.

Félicité's mother was the daughter of a most odious woman.

She had first married M. de Mézières, a man of talent and learning, who possessed an estate in Burgundy, and was early left a widow.

After a very few months she married the Marquis de la Haie, who had been the page and then the

lover of the infamous Duchesse de Berri, eldest daughter of the Regent d'Orléans.

The Marquis was celebrated for his good looks, and was very rich ; but her marriage with him was disastrous for the son and daughter of her first husband, to whom she took a violent and unnatural dislike. She sent her son to America to get rid of him when he was thirteen, and when he arrived there he escaped to Canada, took refuge with the Indians, and made them understand that he had been abandoned by his mother and wanted to live with them, to which they consented on condition of his being tattooed all over.

The courage, strength, and vigour of the boy delighted the Indians, whose language he soon learned and in whose sports and warlike feats he excelled. But, unlike most Europeans who have identified themselves with savages, he did not forget his own language or the education he had received. Every day he traced upon pieces of bark verses or prose in French and Latin, or geometrical problems ; and so great was the consideration he obtained among the Indians that when he was twenty he was made chief of the tribe, then at war with the Spaniards. Much astonished at the way in which the savages were commanded by their young leader, the Spaniards were still more surprised when, on discussing terms of peace, he conversed with them entirely in Latin. Struck with admiration after hearing his history, they invited him to enter the Spanish service, which, when he had arranged a satisfactory treaty for his Indian friends, he did ; made a rich marriage, and being one of those men

who are born to lead, rose as rapidly to power among the Spaniards as among the Indians, and at the end of ten or twelve years was governor of Louisiana. There he lived in prosperity and happiness on his estates in a splendid house in which he formed a magnificent library; and did not visit France until the death of his cruel mother, after which he spent some time in Paris to the great satisfaction of his sister and niece. The latter, who was then at the Palais Royal, describes him as a grave, rather reserved man, of vast information and capacity. His conversation was intensely interesting owing to the extent of his reading in French, Spanish, and Latin, and the extraordinary experiences of his life. He used to dine with her nearly every day, and through his silk stockings she could see the tattooed serpents of his Indian tribe. He was an excellent man, for whom she had the greatest respect and affection.

Mme. de la Haie treated her daughter as badly as her son. She placed her at six years old in a convent, seldom went to see her, when she did showed her no sign of affection, and at fourteen insisted upon her taking the veil. But the irrevocable vows were not to be pronounced for another year, by which time the young girl declared that they might carry her to the church but that before the altar she would say no instead of yes. The Abbess declared that so great a scandal could not be permitted, the enraged mother had to give way, and the young girl joyfully resumed the secular clothes now much too small for her.

But she was left to live in the convent without

ever leaving it, and her lot would have been deplorable indeed but for the affection and sympathy she met with from every one, above all, from the good abbess, Mme. de Rossgnol, who had taken care of her education, and with whom she dined and spent the whole day.

Thus time passed on till she was six-and-twenty, when she formed an intimate friendship with the Marquise de Fontenille, a widow who had come to live in the convent. M. Ducrest, then *de Champcéry*, a good-looking man of thirty-seven, who had lately left the army, was a relation of Mme. de Fontenille, and often came to the *parloir* to see her. He also saw Mlle. de Mézières, with whom he fell in love, and whom he proposed to marry. He had a few hundreds a year, the small castle of Champcéry, and a little property besides; while Mlle. de Mézières had less than two thousand pounds, her mother having seized all the rest of the fortune of her father. But such was her unnatural spite against her daughter that she refused her consent for three months, and although she was at last obliged to give it, she would give neither dot, *trousseau*, nor presents, all of which were provided by the good Abbess.

She came to the wedding with the son and daughter of her second marriage; the latter was afterwards the celebrated Mme. de Montesson. But she managed permanently to cheat her elder daughter out of nearly the whole of the property of her father, and always behaved to her and to her children with the most heartless cruelty.

The mania for education which characterised

Félicité through life began at an early age. While still a child she had a fancy to give instruction to the little boys who came to cut reeds growing by the pond or moat at the foot of the terrace of the *château*.

As the window of her room looked upon the terrace, and was only five feet from the ground, she let herself down by a cord, taking care to choose the days when there was a post, Mlle. de Mars was busy writing to her friends, and her mother out of the way. Leaning upon the low wall of the terrace she instructed the little boys who stood below in what she happened to know herself, *i.e.*, the catechism, the beginning of the principles of music, and certain tragedies which she and they declaimed, and as these instructions were mingled with cakes, fruit, and toys which she threw over the wall to them, they were very well attended, until Mlle. de Mars one day surprised them, and laughed so heartily at the verses recited in *patois* by the little boys that the class came to an end.

From her earliest childhood Félicité had shown a remarkable talent for music and acting, of which her mother was so proud that she did her best to spoil the child by bringing her forward on every occasion to display her talents. She learned to sing, to play the harp, to recite verses; she was dressed up as an *Amour* or a Hebe, she acted Iphigenia and Hector and *Zaire*, and the constant flattery and notice she received evidently and naturally turned her head and laid the foundation of that vanity and self-satisfaction which appears so conspicuously in the records of her life.

When she was about twelve years old she left Burgundy with her mother and Mlle. de Mars. They travelled partly by boat on the Loire, partly with their own carriage and horses, to Paris, where they established themselves, and where Félicité pursued her musical studies with increased ardour. She must have been a precocious young person, for when she was eleven years old the son of the neighbouring doctor fell in love with her, managed to give her a note, which she showed to Mlle. Mars, and meeting with indignant discouragement, he ran away for three years, after which he came home and married somebody else.

M. de Saint-Aubin, meanwhile, whose affairs, which grew worse and worse, were probably not improved by his mismanagement nor by the residence of his wife and daughter in Paris, stayed in Burgundy, coming every now and then to see them. Mlle. de Mars had left them, to the great grief of Félicité, who was now fourteen, and whom the Baron de Zurlauben, Colonel of the Swiss Guards, was most anxious to marry; but, as he was eighty years old, she declined his offer, and also another of a young widower who was only six-and-twenty, extremely handsome and agreeable, and had a large fortune.

By this time, however, she had made up her mind to marry an *homme de qualité*, who belonged to the court. What she then wished was to marry a certain M. de la Popelinière, whom she thought combined the advantages she desired, though he was nothing more illustrious than a *fermier général*, besides being an old man. However, her admira-

tion was not sufficiently returned for him to be of the same opinion.

Since the departure of Mlle. de Mars the vanity and thirst for admiration fostered by her mother's foolish education had greatly increased, but between Mme. de Saint-Aubin and her daughter, though there was affection, there was neither ease nor confidence; the young girl was afraid of her mother, but adored her father. The society into which she was thrown formed her character at an early age, and the artificial, partly affected, partly priggish tone which is apparent in all her voluminous writings detracted from the charm of her undoubtedly brilliant talents.

She already played the harp so remarkably as to excite general admiration, and amongst those who were anxious to be introduced to and to hear her was the philosopher d'Alembert.

Félicité was very much flattered when she heard this, and very much disgusted when she saw him, for he was ugly, common-looking, had a shrill voice, and told stories that displeased her.

D'Alembert was one of the most constant and intimate *habitués* of the *salon* of Mme. Geoffrin, then the stronghold of the philosophers and encyclopædists, as that of the Duchesse de Luxembourg was of the aristocratic *beau monde*.

There was also the *salon* of Mme. du Deffand, who, while more decidedly irreligious and atheistical than Mme. Geoffrin, was her superior in talent, birth, and education, and always spoke of her with the utmost disdain, as a *bourgeoise* without manners or instruction, who did not know

how to write, pronounce, or spell correctly, and saw no reason why people should not talk of *des z'haricots*.

D'Alembert, one of the leading encyclopædists, like most of them, intensely vain, and about whose origin nothing was known, claimed to be the illegitimate son of the Marquise de Tencin, of scandalous reputation. Mme. de Créquy, in her "Souvenirs," scorns the idea, saying also that much of the evil spoken of Mme. de Tencin was untrue; but it is certain that many dark and mysterious rumours clung to the *hôtel Tencin*, the garden of which extended over what is now the *rue de la Paix*. Originally intended for the cloister, Mlle. de Tencin refused to take the vows at Grenoble, and was a conspicuous figure in the wild orgies of the Regency. An intimate friend of the notorious John Law, then controller-general of finance, she succeeded, partly by his influence, in getting her brother made Cardinal and Archbishop of Embrun, and during his lifetime did the honours of his *hôtel*, where, during the days of his power, John Law was a leading spirit. Fortunes were lost and won there in a night, but darker secrets than those of the gambling table were whispered concerning the *hôtel Tencin*, its inhabitants and guests. More than ordinary scandals, even in the days of the Regent Orléans and his shameless daughters, were circulated, and even the murder of one of her lovers was so far believed that Mme. de Tencin was arrested, though shortly afterwards acquitted.

After her brother's death she lost much of her prestige, and held her *salon* in the *rue St. Honoré*, most of her *habitués*, after her death, transferring themselves to the house of Mme. Geoffrin.

CHAPTER II

M. de la Haie—Death of the Dauphin—M. de Saint-Aubin goes to St. Domingo—Taken prisoner by the English—Returns to France—Imprisoned for debt—His death—Difficulties and poverty—Félicité marries the Comte de Genlis—His family—The Abbess de Montivilliers and the robbers—Life in the convent—Birth of a daughter.

THE Marquis de la Haie, uncle of Félicité by the second marriage of her grandmother, strongly disapproved of the way in which his mother treated his half-sister and her children. He vainly tried to influence her to behave better to them, and showed them much kindness and affection himself. Unfortunately he was killed at the battle of Minden. A strange fatality was connected with him, the consequences of which can scarcely be appreciated or comprehended. He was one of the *gentilhommes de la manche*¹ to the Duc de Bourgogne, eldest son of the Dauphin, and *elder brother of Louis XVI.*, who was extremely fond of him. One day he was playing with the boy, and

¹ An office in the household of the eldest son of the heir to the throne, only given to young men of distinction. It was abolished after the death of the Duc de Bourgogne. It was the same as *les menins du Dauphin* under Louis XIV.

in trying to lift him on to a wooden horse he let him fall. Terrified at the accident, and seeing that the Prince had not struck his head, had no wound nor fracture nor any apparent injury, he begged him not to tell any one what had happened. The Duc de Bourgogne promised and kept his word, but from that day his health began to fail. None of the doctors could find out what was the matter with him, but, in fact, he was suffering from internal abscesses, which ultimately caused his death. Not till after La Haie had fallen at Minden did he confess, "It is he who was the cause of my illness, but I promised him not to tell."

This young Prince possessed talent and spirit. Had not his life been sacrificed, the weak, unfortunate Louis XVI. would never have been King, and who can tell how vast might have been the difference in the course of events?

Mme. de Saint-Aubin had found an old friend from her convent, Mme. de Cirrac, who introduced her to her sister, the Duchesse d'Uzès, and others, to whose houses they were constantly invited to supper, but the young girl, with more perception than her mother, began to perceive, in spite of all the admiration lavished upon her, that it was her singing and playing the harp that procured her all these invitations, and that she could not afford to dress like those with whom she now associated, and this spoiled her pleasure in going out. While her mother was in this way striving to lead a life they could not afford, her father, whose affairs grew more and more unprosperous, went to St. Domingo on business.

He did no good, and on his way home was taken prisoner by the English and carried to England. There, amongst other French prisoners, he met the young Comte de Genlis, an officer in the navy who had distinguished himself at Pondicherry, been desperately wounded, and gained the cross of St. Louis. They became great friends, and M. de Genlis expressing great admiration for a miniature of Félicité which her father constantly wore, M. de Saint-Aubin poured into his ears the manifold perfections of his daughter, and read to him the letters he frequently received from her. When M. de Genlis soon afterwards was set free, he used all the means in his power to obtain the release of his friend, and, in the meanwhile, called upon Mme. de Saint-Aubin at Paris, bringing letters from M. de Saint-Aubin, who three weeks afterwards was set at liberty, and returned to France; but his affairs were in such a state that he was induced to give a bill which, when it fell due, he could not meet. Six hundred francs was all that was required to execute the payment, and Mme. de Saint-Aubin wrote to her half-sister, who had married a rich old man, M. de Montesson, asking her to give or lend her money. She refused to do so, and M. de Saint-Aubin was arrested and imprisoned. His wife and daughter spent every day with him for a fortnight, at the end of which, the money being paid, he was released. But his health seemed to decline, and soon afterwards he was seized with a fever which ended fatally, to the inexpressible grief of Félicité, who always laid his death at the door of Mme. de

Montesson, whether with justice or not it is impossible to say, though, at any rate, her refusal to help the sister who had been so shamefully treated, and who was in distress, sounds exceedingly discreditable.

Félicité and her mother took refuge in an apartment lent them by a friend in a Carmelite convent in the *rue Cassette*, where they received the visits of different friends in the *parloir*. Amongst the most assiduous was the Baron d'Andlau, a friend of the late M. de Saint-Aubin, a man of sixty, very rich and of a distinguished family. He wished to marry Félicité, who refused him, but so great were the advantages of such an alliance that her mother desired her to reconsider the matter. As she still declined, he turned his attentions to her mother, and married her at the end of a year and a half.

Meanwhile they stayed on at the convent, where Mme. de Saint-Aubin embroidered and wrote romances, one of which she sent to Voltaire, who wrote her several flattering letters; Félicité played the harp to amuse the nuns and to assist in the services of the chapel, made friendships in the convent, and adored the good sisters, who passed their time in devotion and charity, and amongst whom reigned the most angelic harmony and peace.

When they were obliged to give up their rooms in this convent, they moved to that of St. Joseph, in which Mme. de Saint-Aubin hired an apartment.

Mme. du Deffand then occupied one in another

part of the building, but at that time they had no acquaintance with her. The philosophers and the atheistic set had never at any time in her life the least attraction for Félicité, who held their irreligious opinions in abhorrence.

Very near this convent lived the sister of her father, the Marquise de Sercey, and her family, with whom she spent much of her time.

The young Marquis, her cousin, was starting for St. Domingo, and the day before his departure a *fête de famille* took place, exceedingly characteristic of the France of the eighteenth century.

Félicité composed some verses all about flowers and friendship, which were pronounced to be "very touching," and which she sang dressed up as a shepherdess, having first presented him with a bouquet. She next appeared in a Spanish costume singing a romance composed by her mother, and finally she played the harp, which seems to come in like a chorus throughout all her eventful life.

Meanwhile, she and M. de Genlis had fallen in love with each other, and resolved to marry. As he had neither father nor mother, there was nobody whose consent he was absolutely bound to ask ; but a powerful relation, M. de Puisieux, who was the head of his family, had already, with his consent, begun to negotiate his marriage with a rich young girl. Instead of telling M. de Puisieux the state of the case while there was still time to retire without difficulty, M. de Genlis said nothing, but proposed that they should at once marry secretly, to which neither Félicité nor her relations seem to have made any objection. She had no money, and had

refused all the marriages proposed to her ; here was a man she did like, and who was in all respects unexceptionable, only that he was not well off. But his connections were so brilliant and influential that they could soon put that right, and it was agreed that the marriage should take place from the house of the Marquise de Sercey.

It was celebrated in the parish church at midnight, and the day was publicly announced, and the young Countess and her harp consigned to the care of her husband.

The announcement caused a tremendous uproar in his family, and the only relations who would have anything to do with them were the Count and Countess de Balincourt, who called at once and took a fancy to the young wife, who was only seventeen, clever, accomplished, attractive, and pretty. Mme. de Montesson also, pleased with the marriage of her niece, paid them an early visit, liked M. de Genlis, and invited them to her house.

But the other relations of M. de Genlis would neither return his calls, answer his letters, nor receive him, with the exception of his elder brother, the Marquis de Genlis, who invited them to go down to Genlis, which they did a few days after their wedding.

The young Comte de Genlis had left the navy, by the advice of M. de Puisieux, who had got him made a Colonel of the *Grenadiers de France*.¹ He had only a small estate worth about four hundred a year and the prospect of a share in the succession to the property of his grandmother, the Marquise de

¹ The Grenadiers de France had twenty-four colonels.

Droménil, who was eighty-seven and lived at Reims.

M. de Puisieux was furious at being not only deceived and treated without consideration, but actually made a fool of, and that he was by no means a person to be trifled with the elder brother of the Comte de Genlis had found to his cost.

No lad ever started in life with more brilliant prospects than the Marquis. At fifteen he already possessed the large estate of Genlis, free from debt or mortgage, that of Sillery was settled upon him, and he was already a colonel, owing to the influence of M. de Puisieux, his guardian, and a great favourite of Louis XV.

“Conduct yourself properly,” said he; “you will make a great marriage. Being colonel at your age, you have a splendid military career before you, and as I look upon you as my son I will get the King to make Sillery into a duchy on the occasion of your marriage.”

All this was a certainty supposing he had possessed the most moderate talents, and behaved with common decency. But at seventeen he was already notorious, even at the court of Louis XV., for his vicious life; an incorrigible gambler, and over head and ears in debt. His guardian reproached him, and his debts were paid, but the same thing kept happening until, when he was twenty years old, he lost in one night five hundred thousand francs, his debts besides amounting to another hundred thousand.

Having lost patience, and seeing nothing but ruin before him, M. de Puisieux appealed to

the King, got a *lettre de cachet*, and shut up his hopeful ward at the Château de Saumur, where he remained for five years, while half of what he owed was being paid off. At the end of this time he was ordered to Genlis, where an allowance of fifteen thousand francs was made to him while the remainder of his debts were gradually paid, after which he was allowed to spend three months of the year at Paris, but M. de Puisieux refused to remove the "interdict" until he had made a good marriage. That the *lettres de cachet* had their abuses is incontestable, but they had their advantages too.

Félicité found the Marquis very pleasant, frivolous, amusing, light-hearted, and of unalterable good temper.

Some weeks after their marriage the Comte de Genlis had to rejoin his regiment, which was at Nancy, and as it was then not the custom for officers' wives to accompany them, and he thought Félicité too young to be left by herself at a court such as that of Louis XV., he decided to take an apartment for her at Origny, in a convent where he had relations, as people often did in such cases.

Félicité cried bitterly when her husband left her, but she soon dried her tears, and made herself happy in her new home. She had charming rooms in the interior of the conventual buildings, which were immense; she had her maid with her, and her man-servant was lodged with those of the Abbess in the exterior part of the abbey. She dined with the Abbess, and her *déjeuner* was brought to her own apartment, which consisted, of course, of several rooms.

The abbey was very beautiful, and there were more than a hundred nuns besides the lay sisters and the *pensionnaires* (children and young girls being educated there).

The Abbess was always of a noble family, the one at that time being Mme. de Sabran, and although no proofs were exacted, the nuns nearly all belonged to families of good blood.

Each nun had a comfortable cell, and a pretty little garden of her own in the enclosure of the vast garden of the abbey. One nun, who was considered especially fortunate, had in her garden a rock from which came a spring of delicious water.

The Abbess might receive in her apartment and at dinner whatever guests she chose, men or women, but no men might go to the cloisters or any other part of the abbey. She had a carriage, horses, and servants of her own, and might go out when and where she pleased, taking with her any nuns she chose. She often drove to see different farms, &c., belonging to the abbey, and to visit sick people.

The state and power of some of these abbesses, and the comfortable, cheerful security of their lives at that time made the position much sought after. It was a splendid provision for the daughters of great houses, and a happy life enough if they did not wish to marry. The following anecdote is given by Mme. de Créquy, and, although it happened rather earlier in the eighteenth century, perhaps forty or fifty years before the time now in question, it is so characteristic of the state of things that still prevailed that it may not be out of place to give it.

The Abbess de Montivilliers was one of the greatest abbesses in France, and was at the time this happened Mme. du Froulay, whose niece, Mme. de Créquy, then a *pensionnaire* in the abbey, relates the story.

“The *huissiers* and *valets de porte*, who lived outside the enclosure, had permitted a poor beggar to take shelter every night under a lofty arch leading into the first court of the abbey. He was an unfortunate man, who had neither arms nor legs, and a poor woman, young and, they said, almost pretty, used to come and fetch him each morning with a sort of wheelbarrow, and establish him on the high road to beg. They had bread, soup, and cider given them at the abbey, but very often did not finish them.

“Two murders had been committed upon that same high road; the tribunal of the Abbess had discovered nothing, and terror spread through the country-side. . . . The peasants declared they were committed by evil spirits.

“One autumn night, after ten o'clock, the beggar had not come in. They supposed the woman who took care of him had neglected to fetch him, and charitably waited till half-past. The sister cellarer sent for the keys, to take them, as usual, to the prioress, who would put them under her pillow. She was a *demoiselle de Toustain*, who, *par parenthèse*, had had the golden ball of her prioress's staff engraved with the motto of her family, ‘*Tous-teints-de-sang*’ (‘All stained with blood’), which my aunt had thought out of place on an emblem of religious and pastoral office. She had remarked to the

Prioress, 'My dear daughter, a war-cry is always improper for a bride of Jesus Christ. . . .'

"Instead of the keys of the abbey strange news was brought to Mme. de Toustain. A rich and vigorous farmer had just been attacked on the high road. He had stunned with his club one of his assailants whom the soldiers of the *maré-chaussée* had brought with his accomplice to the archway. They asked for the prison to be opened to put them in, and for the farmer to be allowed to pass the night in the precincts, that he might not fall into the hands of the other robbers. The Prioress having replied that it was too late, they woke the Abbess, who ordered all the doors to be opened that the brigadier required, but the old Prioress was so obstinate about the rules that the Abbess had to get up herself and demand the keys, which otherwise she would not give up.

"As an Abbess of Montivilliers is not rigorously cloistered, my aunt, who was perfectly charitable and courageous, thought herself obliged to go out to the first court, and did so, at any rate with a *cortège* suitable to her dignity.

"She was preceded by a cross-bearer between two acolytes bearing tall candles, and followed by a dozen assistants, with veils down and crossed hands; all the lay sisters of the abbey were ranged round their ladies in large grey capes, carrying lighted torches in those beautiful gothic lanterns, with the arms of the royal abbeys emblazoned in stained glass, which are used in processions at night round the cloisters. Never in modern romances have I seen anything so

romantic and picturesque as that nocturnal scene.

“Mme. de Montivilliers ordered the gates of the prison to be thrown open, which no one but herself would have dared to do against the orders of the Prioress. She gave shelter and a cordial to the brave farmer, and ordered her surgeon to examine the wounded robber, who was a young man dressed in woman’s clothes, and it was then learned from the farmer that the other criminal was that infernal beggar who had been sheltered beneath the porch of the abbey, before which he now lay on a litter waiting to be put in the dungeon. He had the torso of a giant, but no legs or arms, only a kind of stump of one arm. His head was enormous. . . .

“When everything was disposed for the general safety Mme. de Montivilliers raised her veil, and every one knelt to receive her benediction.”

The robbers, who were both executed, were father and son. Their plan was for the cripple to beg for money to be dropped into his hat, then with his stump he pulled down a heavy weight hung in the tree above him which stunned the victim, who was then finished by the other. The farmer had been too quick for them. In the hollow or small cellar under the arch where he slept were found gold, ornaments, hair cut off the nuns, which was always sold for the profit of the Order of the Saint-Rosaire, daggers, and knives. How he got them all was never discovered.

The young Comtesse de Genlis was very happy at Origny, and amused herself like a child amongst the nuns. She ran about the corridors at night

dressed like the devil, with horns ; she put rouge and patches on the nuns while they were asleep, and they got up and went down to the services in the church in the night without seeing themselves thus decorated ; she gave suppers and dances amongst the nuns and pupils to which no men were, of course, admitted ; she played many tricks, and wrote constantly to her husband and mother, the latter of whom came to spend six weeks with her. When her husband came back they went to Genlis, where her brother, who had just gone into the Engineers, paid them a long visit, to her great joy.

Then they went to Paris, where her first child, a daughter, was born.

CHAPTER III

Presentation at Versailles—La Rosière—Father and son—Mme. de Montesson—A terrible scene—The Comtesse de Custine—Mme. de Genlis enters the Palais Royal.

AFTER her confinement the Maréchale d'Etrée came to see Félicité, brought her a present of beautiful Indian stuffs, and said that her parents, M. and Mme. de Puisieux, would have the pleasure of receiving her when she was recovered. Also that Mme. de Puisieux would present her at Versailles.

To this she looked forward with some trepidation, being dreadfully afraid of Mme. de Puisieux, who at first did not like her, and was extremely stiff. She drove down to Versailles in her carriage alone with her, Mme. de Puisieux saying very little, but criticising the way she did her hair. They slept at Versailles, in the splendid apartment of the Maréchal d'Etrée, who was very kind and pleasant to Félicité, and with whom she felt more at home. The next day she was obliged to spend such an enormous time at her toilette that by the time they started she was nearly tired out. Her hair was dressed three times over ; everything was

the object of some tiresome fuss, to which policy obliged her to submit in silence.

At last, however, it was finished, and she stood in the presence of Louis XV. He was no longer young, but she thought him handsome and imposing. He had intensely blue eyes, a short but not brusque manner of speaking, and something royal and majestic about his whole bearing which distinguished him from other men. He talked a great deal to Mme. de Puisieux, and made complimentary remarks about Félicité, after which they were presented to the Queen, who was lying in a reclining chair, already suffering from the languor of the fatal illness caused by the recent death of her son, the Dauphin. Then came the presentation to Mesdames, and to the "Children of France," and in the evening they went to the "*jeu de Mesdames*."

After this Félicité and her husband returned to Genlis, where they spent the summer with the Marquis and the wife he had recently married.

They passed their time in all the amusements of the *vie de château* in those days.

The brothers went out shooting; there were visits, dances, village *fêtes*; they dressed up, wrote verses, acted plays, and went to see the "Rosière," an institution which, in this century, would be an impossibility, and which even then many people were beginning to find silly and useless, as may be shown by the remarks of a M. de Matigny, a magistrate and *bailli*, who was staying in the house for some theatricals, and whom they tried to persuade to stop another day.

"I can't," he said. "I am obliged to go to another village."

"What for?"

"Oh! for that nonsense they do every year."

"What nonsense?"

"I have to go there as a judge to hear all the rubbish and gossip you can imagine for forty-eight hours."

"What about?"

"A most stupid thing, as I will tell you. It is not to adjudge a house, or a field, or an inheritance, but a rose!"

"How? A rose? You are to give a rose?"

"Eh! *Mon Dieu!* Yes, it is I who have to decide this important affair. It is an old custom established there in barbarous times. It is astonishing that, in a century so enlightened as ours, they should not have done away with a folly that gives me a journey of ten or twelve leagues every summer, through abominable cross-lanes, for I have to make two journeys for that absurdity."

"A rose does not seem to me particularly barbarous. But who do you give it to?"

"To the peasant girl declared to be the most virtuous and obedient to her parents."

"And they assemble to give her a rose in public?"

"Yes. A fine reward for a poor creature who perhaps has not bread to eat, isn't it? I shall have to go to-morrow to hear the evidence . . . and again in a month for what they call the coronation. It might amuse you to see it once. . . . But the strangest thing is the importance these good people

attach to the ceremony, and the exultation of the relations of the '*rosière*.' One would think they had gained a valuable prize. It may amuse one for the moment, but when one has to see it every year, it is a ridiculous thing for a reasonable man."

Félicité soon managed to make friends with all her husband's relations. M. and Mme. de Puisieux not only got over their prejudice against her, but were devoted to her. She spent months together with them at Sillery, and was a great deal with them at Paris, where her great delight was to know every one who could remember the court of Louis XIV., for which she had the most ardent admiration.

There were, of course, still those to be met with whose appearance, manners, and ways recalled that stately, magnificent court, which long afterwards was the *beau idéal* Napoleon vainly tried to realise. Amongst others was the Duc de Richelieu, one of the most brilliant, the most polished, the most dissipated, and the most heartless figures of the courts of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. His son, the Duc de Fronsac, was, though not equally attractive, quite as vicious as his father, and they entertained for each other a hatred they generally veiled, at any rate in public, under the most polished sarcasm.

On one occasion the Duc de Richelieu so far departed from his usual habit as to recommend to the Duc de Fronsac a lad who bore a strong resemblance to himself, begging him to give him a post in his household and look after him. Fronsac, struck with jealousy of this *protégé* of his father's, did all he could to corrupt and ruin him, taught him to be a gambler and reprobate, and finally led

him into collision with himself in some love intrigue, challenged him to a duel, and killed him.

Shortly afterwards, passing his father in the great gallery at Versailles, the Duc de Richelieu said to him—

“Monsieur, you have killed your brother.”

“I knew it,” replied Fronsac, and passed on.

Within the first few years of her marriage, Félicité had three children—two girls and a boy.

The Comte de Genlis passed part of his time with her and the rest with his regiment, during which Félicité lived at Paris or stayed with his relations, chiefly the de Puisieux, leading a life of gaiety mingled with study and music, and going constantly into society, which has, perhaps, never been equalled in fascination and charm.

Her aunt, Mme. de Montesson, had, since her marriage, been on very friendly and intimate terms with her, although the two had never any real affection for each other, and now, M. de Montesson having died, his widow was aiming at nothing less than becoming the Duchess of Orléans, and found her niece a most useful and sympathetic confidant. For it had suited Mme. de Montesson to have a niece so well placed in society and so much sought after as the young Comtesse de Genlis. Félicité, on her part, was by no means blind to the advantage of having her aunt married to the first prince of the blood, and did everything in her power to forward her plans. The Duke had long been an admirer of Mme. de Montesson, who encouraged his devotion, was continually in his society, but had no intention whatever that their love-making should

end in any way but one. It was an ambition that seemed barred with almost insuperable difficulties, and yet it succeeded, though not to the full extent she desired.

The excellent M. de Puisieux died, and Félicité found her life still more taken up by his widow, with whom she now passed much of her time. Just then took place the marriage of the Duc de Berri, now Dauphin, with the Archduchess Marie Antoinette. Mme. de Puisieux would not go herself, but sent Félicité to see the fireworks in the *place Louis XV.*

As M. de Genlis was with his regiment, she went with a friend, the Marquise de Brugnon, who was also young and pretty, MM. de Bouzolle and de Nedonchel. A room had been lent them on the ground floor of a new house from which to see the *fête*, and, fearing there would be a great crowd, they arrived directly after dinner. There was some delay before the fireworks began, and Félicité, who was, with all her talents, very often extremely silly and affected, declared that she had waited so long she did not care to see the fireworks, and persisted in keeping her eyes shut until they were over.

The two gentlemen then went to look for the carriage, which had not come. They were away a long time. A fearful noise seemed to be going on in the *place Louis XV.*, and when, after midnight, they did return, they assured the anxious, rather frightened young women that they could not find either carriage or servants, that the crowd was fearful, and there would be no chance of getting

away for at least two hours, so they had brought them some cakes and a chicken for supper. They did not tell them of the fire, the horrible confusion, and the people being crushed to death in the *place*. But presently groans and cries were heard just under their window, and, looking out, they saw two old ladies in full evening dress, with *paniers*—the Marquise d'Albert and the Comtesse de Renti, who, while trying to get to their carriage, had got separated from their servants and carried along by the crowd. As it was impossible to get them to the door, they leaned out of the window and drew them up with great difficulty. Mme. d'Albert was covered with blood, as some one in the crowd had snatched out one of her diamond ear-rings.

Their carriage never came, so Mme. de Genlis had to take them home in hers, which appeared about two o'clock, and it was half-past three when she arrived at the *hôtel de Puisieux*, where everybody was up and in a fever of anxiety, thinking she was killed, for they knew what she did not, that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of persons had perished.

Mme. de Puisieux was in tears on the staircase, and saw her come in with transports of joy. She had, for the first time since her widowhood, gone to supper with Mme. d'Egmont, daughter of the Duc de Richelieu, close to whose *hôtel* there was a *corps de garde*, to which numbers of bodies had been brought. The next day was one of desolation, especially among the artisans and the people of the lower classes, most of whom had lost some relative or friend. Mme. de Genlis's maid had to go to the

Morgue to identify the body of her sister ; the *maître d'hôtel* lost a cousin. The *place Louis XV.*, fated to be the scene of the murder of Louis XVI., Marie Antoinette, and so many innocent victims, had been a scene of death and horror at the celebration of their wedding *fêtes*. No wonder people said it was an unlucky beginning, especially those who were only too glad to find evils attending the Austrian marriage.¹

The enthusiasm of Félicité for the court of Louis XIV. found worthier objects of admiration than the Duc de Richelieu, in the excellent Maréchal de Balincourt, and his friends, the Maréchal de Biron and the Marquis de Carrillac. This last was ninety-one years old, Biron was eighty-six or seven, and Balincourt not more than seventy. He used to speak with envy of Biron, saying : " He was thirty years old at the death of the late king." When hearing them talk together she felt herself transported into the days of that magnificent reign.

They had all of them the stately courtesy, the chivalrous gallantry, and the delicate sense of honour which made them so bright a contrast to the vice and depravity around them.

¹ In an old German town is a large and ancient house belonging to one of the principal families of the place. It contains a beautiful ball-room in the Venetian style, white and gold, with numbers of mirrors. But it is never used, being supposed to be unlucky, as the only occasions on which people have danced there were two : first, when Marie Antoinette passed through the town to be married to the Dauphin, when the room, which had been decorated on purpose for her, was only just finished in time, the Italian workmen leaving the ball-room as she entered it. The second time it was used was by Marie Louise, her niece, as she was on her way to marry the Emperor Napoleon. I have myself seen the room and been told the story.—Note by Author.

Just after the last recorded incidents Félicité experienced a great sorrow in the loss of her friend, the Comtesse de Custine, an angelic woman, who, in spite of her beauty and youth (she was only twenty-four), lived as far as she could apart from the world, fearing the corruption and vice around her, and devoting herself to her religious and domestic duties. Her husband, who adored her, was necessarily absent with his regiment for long periods. Her brother-in-law, the Vicomte de Custine, of a character as bad as that of his brother was admirable, professed openly the most violent passion for Mme. de Genlis, who did not care at all for him, gave him no encouragement, but was rather flattered by the excess of his devotion and despair.

When the Comtesse de Custine died, after a short illness, her husband was away with his regiment, and did not arrive in time to see her alive. During the first days of his despair, while looking over her papers, he came upon a packet of letters which proved beyond all doubt the infamous treachery of the Vicomte, who had made his pretended love for Mme. de Genlis a shield to hide his real passion for his brother's wife, which had been the horror and torment of her life, and which she had dreaded to reveal to her husband, whose temper was violent when aroused.

For some time Félicité had been wishing to obtain a place at court, and it had been suggested that she should be placed in the household of the comtesse de Provence, whose marriage with the second *fil de France* was about to take place.

But her aunt, Mme. de Montesson, was most

anxious that she should enter the service of the Duc de Chartres, who was the eldest son of the Duc d'Orléans, and very much opposed to Mme. de Montesson's designs upon him.

It appeared after a time that the post in the household of the Comtesse de Provence was not attainable, and in the first disappointment of this refusal, Mme. de Montesson told her niece that she had only to ask and she would receive an appointment at the Palais Royal.

Mme. de Custine, whom she consulted, was absolutely opposed to it, and after urging the strongest reasons against it, added that it was evidently her duty to stay and take care of Mme. de Puisieux as long as she lived.

However, she allowed herself to be persuaded : she went with her aunt constantly to Raincy, the country place just bought by the Duc d'Orléans ; she was attracted by the gentle, charming Duchesse de Chartres, she listened to the representations of the advantages she might secure for her children, and at length she laid the case before Mme. de Puisieux, who, unselfishly putting away the consideration of her own grief at their separation, and thinking only of the advantages to Félicité and her family, advised her to accept the position offered her.

Félicité seems, however, to have always considered that she made a mistake, or, indeed, as she says, committed a fault, one of the greatest in her life, by doing so ; if so, it does not appear to be a surprising one, as the plan certainly would have offered strong attractions and inducements even to a woman less vain and ambitious than she was, but

it is certain that it caused many calamities and exercised an evil influence for which no advantages could compensate. She left the *hôtel de Puisieux* before Madame was up in the morning, as she dreaded the parting, and as her apartment in the Palais Royal was not ready she was lodged in one that had belonged to the Regent, with a door into the *rue de Richelieu*. She nearly had an accident before she got out of the carriage, and felt low-spirited and unhappy, wishing herself back in her own room at the *hôtel de Puisieux* as she looked round the luxurious boudoir lined with mirrors, which she did not like at all, and which seemed associated with the orgies of the Regency, of which it had been the scene.

She felt that she had exchanged security, the protection of a beautiful and well-ordered home, and the society of those she loved and respected, for dependence and danger.

CHAPTER IV

Society of the Palais Royal—Philippe-Égalité—An Apparition—
Mlle. Mars—M. Ducrest—Marriage of Mme. de Montesson—
Marly—The Prime Minister of France

THE society of the Palais Royal was at that time the most brilliant and witty in Paris, and she soon became quite at home there. The Comtesse de Blot, lady of honour to the Duchesse de Chartres, was pleasant enough when she was not trying to pose as a learned woman, at which times her long dissertations were tiresome and absurd; she was also ambitious, and what was worse, avaricious.

Mme. de Clermont had been married at fifteen to the Comte de Choisi, who was much older than herself, and of whom she was dreadfully afraid; but he was killed at the battle of Minden, and she had just married the Comte de Clermont, who was deeply in love with her. She was young, pretty, very capricious, and a friend of Mme. de Montesson, and with all her faults never dull or tiresome, but full of merry talk and amusing stories; the Comtesse de Polignac and the Marquise de Barbantour were also among the ladies of the household

with whom Félicité was now associated ; two much older ones were the Comtesses de Rochambault and de Montauban.

The Duchesse de Chartres, *née* Mlle. de Pen-thièvre, was an angel of goodness and kindness. She had conceived so violent a passion for the Duc de Chartres, when she had met him for the first time, that she declared she would either marry him or take the veil. It was a most unfortunate choice to have been made, especially by so saintly a personage, for the court and society of Louis XV. did not include a more corrupt and contemptible character than the notorious Philippe-Égalité.

The attraction he felt for Mme. de Genlis, which had such a powerful influence upon her life and so disastrous an effect upon her reputation, had not begun when she first took up her abode at the Palais Royal.

It was said by his illegitimate brothers, MM. de Saint-Far and Saint-Albin, to have begun on a certain evening when a quadrille arranged by Mme. de Genlis, in which each couple represented proverbs, went to the Opera ball, as the custom of those days permitted, and was suddenly disarranged by an enormous cat, which, mewing and clawing, rolled itself suddenly into the midst of the dancers. The cat proved to be a little Savoyard boy, dressed up in fur, dreadfully frightened at the abuse and kicks he received.

This elegant trick was traced to the Duc de Chartres and his friends ; and the good temper and general demeanour of Mme. de Genlis on this provoking occasion struck the Duke with

admiration and compunction. Philippe-Égalité, contemptible as his disposition undoubtedly was, had also been very badly brought up, and when he was fifteen his father had given him a mistress who was afterwards notorious as Mlle. Duthé; he was always surrounded with a group of the fastest young men at court, the Chevalier de Coigny, MM. de Fitz-James, de Conflans, &c.

“The social existence of Mme. de Genlis,” writes Mme. d’Abrantès,¹ “is always a problem difficult to resolve; it is composed of a mass of contradictions, one more extraordinary than the other. Of a noble family, whose name and alliances gave her the right to be *chanoinesse* of the Chapter of Alix, she was called until her marriage Comtesse de Lancy. She married M. de Genlis, a man of high rank, nearly related to most of the great families in the kingdom, and yet Mme. de Genlis had never in society the attitude of a *grande dame*. . . . The important part this woman played in the destinies of France is of such a nature that one must notice it, more especially as she denies a mass of facts, the most notorious of the time in which her name is mixed up, . . . pretending never to have spoken to men of whom she must not only have been an acquaintance but a friend. Long before the first outbursts of the Revolution, Mme. de Genlis helped to prepare the influence which afterwards burst like an accursed bomb, covering with its splinters even the woman who had prepared the wick and perhaps lighted the match.

¹ “Salons de Paris,” t. I, p. 435 (Duchesse d’Abrantès, ed. Garnier).

“ It was an eccentric existence that she led in her youth, it must be confessed. That wandering, restless life had a character all the more strange because at that time it was so unusual ; going perpetually from one *château* to another, roaming about the country disguised as a peasant, playing tricks on everybody, eating raw fish, playing the harp like Apollo, dancing, acting, fencing. . . .”

And now she was *dame pour accompagner* to the Duchesse de Chartres, and her influence was soon felt in the society of the Palais Royal.

On the nights when there was an opera, the Palais Royal was open to any one who had been presented there. The first invitation to supper meant a standing one for those days, therefore the Palais Royal was then crowded with guests ; and on other evenings the *petits soupers*, generally consisting of eighteen or twenty guests, were composed of those of the intimate society of the Duke and Duchess, who also had a general invitation.

The Duchesse de Chartres continued for a long time very fond of Mme. de Genlis, who was exceedingly attractive, not only because of her beauty, talents, and accomplishments, but because she was so interesting and amusing that it was impossible to be dull in her company. And though she had many faults she had also many excellent qualities. She was very affectionate and kind to those for whom she really cared, she was charitable, good tempered, and courageous ; her reputation so far was good, and her respect for religion made her shun the atheistical philosophic set whose opinions on those points she detested. One friend she had

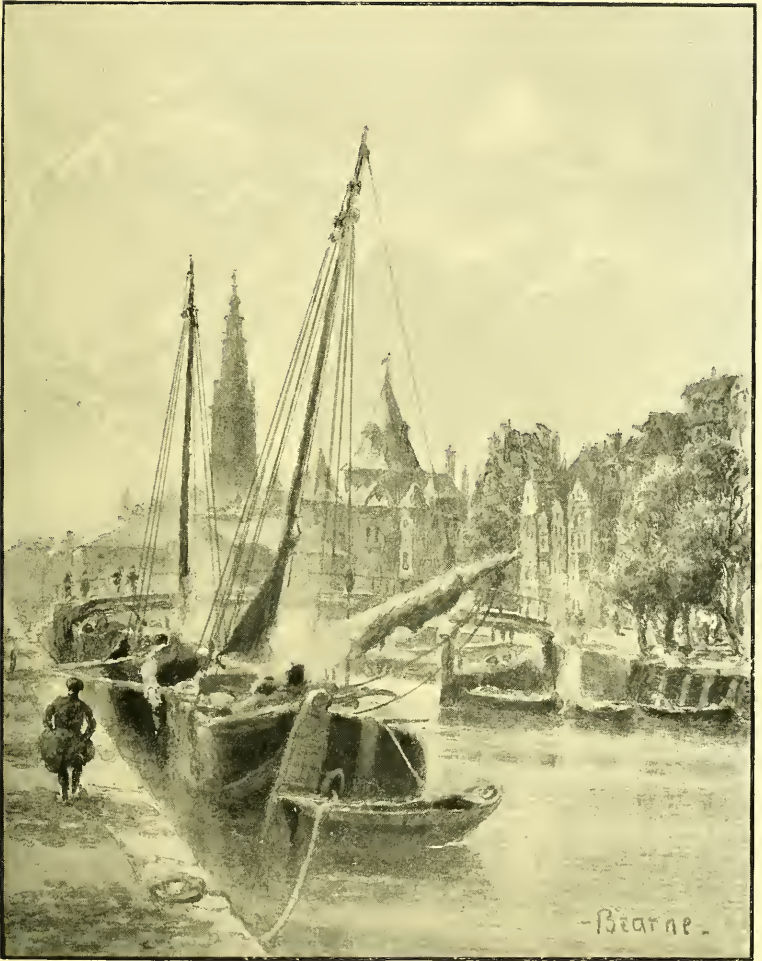
among them, the Comte de Schomberg, was an exception to this rule. He was a friend of Voltaire, and a pronounced atheist, but it was an understood thing that no religious subject should be discussed between them, and no word of impiety spoken in her presence. The events of the Revolution converted M. de Schomberg, and he died some years after it an ardent Christian.

Many of these disbelievers in Christianity were terribly afraid of ghosts. "*Je n'y crois pas, mais je les redoute,*" as somebody once remarked.

She made one or two journeys to Holland and Belgium when she wished for a change, but in 1775 a terrible grief overtook her, in the death of her son, now five years old. The children were living near, and her mother was then with them when she herself caught measles, and as often happens when they are taken later in life than is usual, she was extremely ill, and it was impossible to tell her that her children had the same complaint.

M. de Genlis, who had also a post at the Palais Royal, was nursing her, and her mother came every day to see her.

The child died at five o'clock one morning. "At the same hour," she writes, "of the same day, I was alone with my nurse, and, raising my eyes to the canopy of my bed, I distinctly saw my son in the form of an angel . . . holding out his arms to me. This vision, without exciting any suspicions, caused me great surprise. I rubbed my eyes several times, but always saw the same figure. My mother and M. de Genlis came at about eleven; they were overcome with grief, but I was not surprised, for I



AMSTERDAM

E. H. Bearne

To face page 390

knew I was ill enough to make them very anxious. I could not help looking always at the canopy of my bed with a sort of shudder, and my mother, knowing that I was afraid of spiders, asked if I saw one . . . at last I said I would not tell them what I saw lest they should think my brain was deranged, but they pressed me until I told them."

They concealed the calamity for five weeks, and then brought her a miniature of the child as an angel.

Félicité recovered, and went to Spa, and to travel in Belgium. After her return, as she was walking one day in the Palais Royal gardens, she met a young girl with a woman of seven or eight and thirty, who stopped and gazed at her with an earnest look. Suddenly she exclaimed—

"It is Mlle. Mars!" Embracing each other with joy, they arranged to meet the following day, and Mlle. Mars presented herself accordingly at the Palais Royal, where they spent the morning talking of old times and of present circumstances. Mlle. Mars was not very happy where she now lived, and Félicité succeeded in placing her as governess to the children of the Princess Louise de Condé, meanwhile seeing her every day. She married soon afterwards.

About this time she arranged for her brother an excellent marriage which turned out very happily. She had the young people to live with her at first, and M. de Genlis was extremely kind to them; but at the end of some months Mme. de Montesson, in whom she had contrived to arouse an interest in them, took them to live permanently with her.

As Saint-Aubin had long been sold, her brother now called himself M. Ducrest.

In her "Memoirs," Mme. de Genlis says that the years she spent at the Palais Royal were the most brilliant and the most unhappy of her life.

The brilliant social success, and the life, a perpetual scene of pleasure, excitement and intense interest, were chequered with all sorts of annoyances. The envy she excited by her social triumphs, the favour of the Duchess, and later, of the Duc de Chartres, displayed itself as usual in slanders, misrepresentations, and different spiteful actions; while the hostility she aroused caused her more astonishment than would have been expected in a woman possessing so much knowledge of the world, and more unhappiness than one might suspect in one so entirely self-satisfied.

And although she was undoubtedly maligned, like many persons who gave less opportunity for gossip; still it was the consequence of her own act in placing herself in such a position, and identifying herself with such a crew. Her futile attempts to whitewash Philippe-Égalité can deceive nobody: he was too well-known. When she lays all his faults to his being badly brought up and surrounded with bad companions, one recollects the numbers of men and of women too, who, brought up and living under the same conditions, suffered and died with a heroism and loyalty that redeemed the faults and follies of their past.

And as to Mme. de Genlis, it appears more than probable that if she had followed the advice of Mme. de Custine, as she promised to do, and re-

mained at the *hôtel de Puisieux* she would still have been a great literary and social success and also a better and happier woman.

Mme. de Montesson had so far succeeded in her plan that she had, in 1773, been privately married to the Duke of Orléans. The marriage was celebrated at midnight in the presence of a small number of persons of high position. But the marriage, though known and recognised in society, was only a morganatic one. Louis XV. would never hear of her taking the rank and title of Duchess of Orléans, or any precedence that would have been the consequence. This was of course a continual grievance to her, but she was obliged to resign herself and make the best of the position, at any rate far more exalted than any to which she had the least pretension to aspire. She had an unbounded influence over the Duc d'Orléans, in whose household and amongst whose friends she was always treated as a princess, and with whom she led a life of unbounded luxury and magnificence. Like Mme. de Maintenon after her morganatic marriage with Louis XIV. she renounced the title of Marquise and was known as Mme. de Montesson, possibly thinking like the hero of the well-known incident: "Princesse je ne puis pas, Marquise je ne veux pas, Madame je suis."¹

The year after the marriage Louis XV. died, but Louis XVI. would not depart from the attitude his grandfather had assumed, with regard to the morganatic marriage of the Duc d'Orléans.

The journeys of the court to the different country

¹ It was one of the family of Rohan who said: "Roi ne puis, prince ne daigne, Rohan je suis."

palaces, Versailles, Compiègne, Fontainebleau, Marly, &c., were affairs of enormous expense, and ceremony so preposterous, that, for instance, there was one sort of court dress for Versailles, and another, equally magnificent and uncomfortable, for Marly. On the 1st of January Louis XV. always arranged with care and consideration the journeys for the year to the different palaces, of which there were a great number. Mme. Campan¹ in her "Mémoires," says that Marly, even more than Versailles, transported one vividly to the reign of Louis XIV.; its palaces and gardens were like a magnificent scene in an opera; fountains, pavilions, statues, marble basins, ponds and canals, thickets of shrubs, groups of tall trees, trellised walks and arbours, amongst which the ladies and gentlemen of the royal households and court walked about in full dress; plumes, paniers, jewels, and trains making any enjoyment of the country out of the question, but impressing with awe and admiration the crowds who were admitted to the gardens, and to the suppers and gambling at night. Every trace of this palace and gardens disappeared in the Revolution.

During the latter part of the reign of Louis XV. the rule of perpetual court dress at Marly was given up, and when Louis XVI. came to the throne he tried, but without success, to discourage the gambling, which he hated; but what Marie Antoinette disliked was the stiffness, fatigue, and restraint of these journeys, and she insisted that at Trianon, which the King had given her, she should be free from the

¹ "Souvenirs" (Campan), p. 209.

intolerable *gêne* of the etiquette which the last two reigns had so increased as to be an intolerable burden, in former centuries unknown at the court of France.

The party in opposition to the Queen, absolutely unscrupulous and vindictive, hesitated at no calumny or exaggeration that might do her injury; and everything seemed to create fresh enemies for her.

When she received the ladies of the Court on her accession, Mme. de Clermont-Tonnerre, a thoughtless girl of sixteen, sat on the carpet all the time, hidden by the ladies of the household who stood before her, making grimaces behind her fan, whispering nonsense, pulling the dresses of her companions and making them all, even the Queen herself, unable to restrain their laughter; so that great offence was given and the blame of course laid on the Queen. The King was very angry, sent for Mme. de Clermont-Tonnerre and reprimanded her; whereupon she turned all her spite against the Queen, and all the Clermonts went into opposition.

When first he succeeded to the throne and the question arose who was to be prime minister, Madame Victoire wrote to Louis XVI., recommending M. de Machault, then exiled from Paris.

The King accordingly wrote a letter summoning him; but meanwhile Madame Adelaide, supported by her two youngest sisters, Mesdames Sophie and Louise, and having persuaded the Queen to join them, appealed to him in favour of M. de Maurepas, a man as stupid, prejudiced, and incapable as could be found.

However, the King soon began to yield.

"But my letter has gone," he said; "what shall I do?"

"I hope not," said the Queen, "we shall see." And she rang the bell. "Campan, the King has an order to give you."

"Go," said Louis XVI. in a tone of vexation, "and tell the page of the *grande écurie* to bring me back the letter I gave him." "But Madame," turning to the Queen, "I warn you that if he is gone it is all the better for M. de Machault. I cannot recall my confidence when he holds the proof in his hand." ¹

Campan ran; the page was already in the saddle, but was altering a stirrup, which changed the destiny of France. The letter was brought back.

When Maurepas received this summons he jumped and capered with joy; danced round the room with his wife and told his cat it should have the *entrée* at Versailles. Thus he prepared to govern the kingdom of France.

¹ "Souvenirs de Marie Antoinette," t. 2, p. 11 (Adhémar).

CHAPTER V

La Muette—Sunrise—Italy—Nocturnal adventure—Governess to the children of Orléans—Scandalous reports—Marriages of her daughters—Death of the elder one—The Comte de Valence

ONE of the Royal palaces was La Muette, and it was on one of the journeys there that the Queen took it into her head to see the sun rise. It appeared a harmless fancy enough, and she suggested it to the King.

“Indeed,” he said, “you have a strange fancy. Night is made to sleep in; however, if it amuses you I have no objection so long as you do not expect me to be of the party.”

Mme. de Noailles, to whom it was also necessary to speak of the proposed plan, was much perturbed.

“Really,” she said, “this question seems to me very difficult to solve. A Queen go to see the sun rise! I do not know whether in the days of Louis XIV. it would not have been thought——”

“Eh! Madame,” cried the Queen impatiently, “spare us ceremonial in the face of nature.”

“However, it is impossible to dispense with an escort of equerries, pages, *valets de pieds* to carry

torches, *piqueurs*, *gardes du corps*, and a detachment of the *maison rouge*."

"Comtesse de Noailles, you forget the *grand-aumônier*, to bless the rising sun after having exorcised the spirits of darkness."

The Comtesse de Noailles frowned.

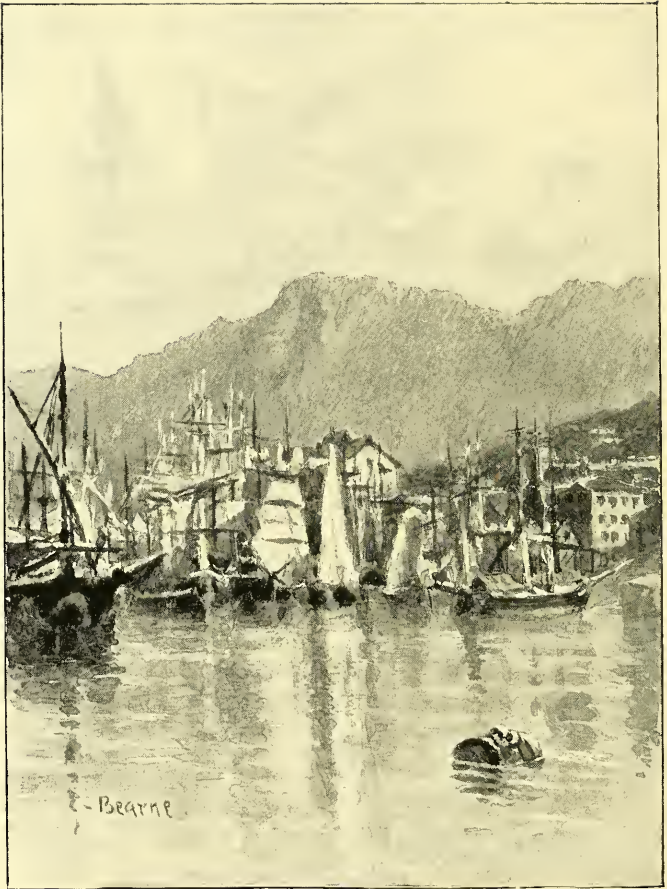
"Ah! Madame l'Etiquette," cried Marie Antoinette, laughing, "God made patience the virtue of kings."

Directly the Duc de Chartres heard of the project he came to ask to be of the party, and as he was not as yet the open enemy of the royal family, his request was granted.

On the night fixed upon the party, consisting of the Queen, the Comtes and Comtesses de Provence and d'Artois and some ladies and gentlemen of their households, started at three in the morning for Meudon, where a banquet was prepared, after which they went out on the terraces to see the sun rise. It was a lovely night, lamps were scattered about the gardens, guards were posted everywhere, the Queen's ladies followed her closely. There was a splendid sun rise and all passed off well; but a few days afterwards came out an infamous libel called "*l'Aurore*," containing accusations and statements so atrocious that the King, taking it to the Queen, said—

"Madame, do you know what it costs to wish for once in one's life to see the sun rise? Read that and tell me what you think of the poetry of our friends."

The Queen read it, burst into tears, and demanded justice and vengeance, which the King, throwing down and trampling on the infamous paper,



NICE

E. H. Bearne

To face page 309

promised ; but said it was difficult to find the persons guilty of writing and selling it—it seemed to have been printed in Holland and the authorship was guessed to be one of the Radical set : Voltaire, Brissot, or perhaps the Duc de Chartres.

Marie Antoinette spoke to the latter about it, and of course he indignantly denied all complicity, but confessed that the libel had been sent him in an envelope, adding that he had thrown it into the fire, and if any of his people had been more imprudent he would dismiss them at once.

For the first circulation had been traced to some of his household. He sent away two men in his service, but it was well known that he paid them their wages all the time and soon took them back again.

It was asserted by one person that she had seen the MS. of the "*Aurore*" on the table of Mme. de Genlis, but it is not likely that she would have been guilty of mixing herself in such an infamy ; it was one of the slanders, probably, of which she complained, but was the result of associating intimately with such a man as the Duc de Chartres.

The Count and Countess de Genlis accompanied the Duke and Duchess de Chartres to Bordeaux, where he embarked, after a naval review ; and the Duchess proceeded on a tour in Italy. To Félicité this was a time of enchantment. The journeys at that time were adventurous, and the *Cornice* road was then an affair of difficulty if not danger. They went by sea to Nice, spent a week in that delicious climate, and determined to make what she called "the perilous journey" from Nice to Genoa. They

went on mules over the pass by Turbia, and found the *Cornice* as she says truly a *corniche*—so narrow that in some places they could hardly pass singly, and often they had to get down and walk. They slept at Ospedaletto, the Duchess, Félicité, and the Countess de Rully in one room; the Duchess on a bed made of the rugs of the mules, the others, on cloaks spread upon a great heap of corn. After six days of perils and fatigues, and what they called horrible precipices, they got to Genoa.

They went to Rome, Venice, Naples, and all the little Italian Courts, at which they were received with great honour.

Félicité flirted and amused herself as usual, and at the court of Modena, the Comte de Lascaris took a violent fancy to her. He was *surintendant* of the palace, and arranged the distribution of the different apartments, and Félicité found her room was at a great distance from that of the Comte de Genlis, and lined with mirrors.

After supper one evening she had retired to her room and was sitting up late, writing; when one of the mirrors moved, and from a door behind it entered M. de Lascaris, and threw himself at her feet. She sprang up with a cry, the table fell upon him, the lamp went out, her maid rushed in—alarmed by her mistress calling loudly for her—in her nightdress candle in hand, while M. de Lascaris disappeared through the door he had come in by, with a cut on his cheek from the table, which excited the curiosity and laughter of the court. To Félicité Italy was one long enchantment, and with reluctance she came back to France.

For some years Mme. de Genlis had been *dame pour accompagner la Duchesse de Chartres*, though it was suggested that it was more the Duke than the Duchess whom she accompanied; but she now exchanged this designation for that of "governess to the Princesses of Orléans." The Duchess, who had always longed for a daughter, was delighted with these two and Mme. de Genlis, who wished to have charge of them from the first.

As, during the first years of their lives, even Félicité herself could not begin to instruct them, she paid a daily visit of an hour to them, and occupied herself in writing a book on education for their use and that of her own children. She also wrote "Adèle et Théodore," and numbers of other books, novels, essays, plays, treatises on education, &c., which had great success.

When the twin daughters of the Duc de Chartres were five years old, one of them caught the measles, got a chill and died, to the great grief of the Duchess and the remaining twin, Madame Adelaide d'Orléans. One day the Duc de Chartres came to consult Félicité, as he was in the habit of doing on all occasions; and on this one he confided to her that he could not find a tutor he liked for his boys, that they were learning to speak like shop boys, and that he wished she would undertake their education as well as that of their sister; to which she agreed. It was arranged that the Duke should buy a country house at Belle Chasse, where they should spend eight months of the year; the Duchesse agreed to the plan, all was settled, and Mme. de Genlis embarked on the career of educa-

tion, which had always been a passion with her, and which she could now pursue with every advantage.

The three young Orléans princes were, the Duc de Valois, afterwards Louis Philippe, the Duc de Montpensier, and the Comte de Beaujolais. The eldest was eight years old.

Besides, she educated her own two daughters, her nephew, César Ducrest, whose mother died and whose father (her brother) was given a post at the Palais Royal, a young cousin, Henriette de Sercey, and later on one or two other children she adopted. But what caused considerable speculation and scandal was the sudden appearance of a little girl, who was sent, she said, from England, to speak English with the other children amongst whom she was educated. On perfectly equal terms with the Princes and Princesses of Orléans, petted and made much of by every one, she was, and still is supposed by many, perhaps by most people, to have been really the daughter of Mme. de Genlis and the Duc de Chartres. At any rate, no English relations were ever forthcoming, and it was never clearly established where she came from, except that she was announced to have been sent over from England at the request of the Duc de Chartres. She was remarkably beautiful and talented, and Mme. de Genlis brought her forward, and did everything to make her as affected and vain as she had been made herself.

The life at Belle Chasse was, as she says, delicious. She had supreme authority, she was dispensed from the trouble of paying visits to any one but

Mme. de Puisieux ; she had her mother and children to live with her ; her husband and brother had posts in the household of the Duc de Chartres.

She could receive her friends as she pleased ; her literary reputation stood very high ; the Duchesse de Chartres was still infatuated about her ; while the Duke——

Mme. de Genlis made a great display of disinterestedness, she refused the 20,000 francs a year offered her by the Duke as governess to his children, declaring that she would educate them for nothing ; she refused also the diamonds sent by the Duke and Duchess as a wedding present to her daughter, neither of which refusals there was the slightest occasion to make, but theatrical, unnecessary things were always what she preferred to do. And at the same time she and her family were becoming very rich. Of course her books, bought by all her friends at court, in society, and everywhere, brought her a good deal, but she always had money for everything she wanted. She was promised for her eldest daughter on her marriage, her own former place at the Palais Royal, and a regiment for her son-in-law, her relations were placed and provided for, and she, of course, lived in state and luxury with the Orléans children, amongst whom her own were educated.

Her eldest girl, Caroline, was of a charming disposition, and remarkably beautiful. She inherited her own musical talents and was extremely clever and accomplished. When she was fourteen she was married to a Belgian, the Marquis de Lawoestine ; and the wedding was celebrated with great state

at the Palais Royal, the Maréchal Prince de Soubise acting as father to the bridegroom. She gave the young girl a magnificent trousseau, diamonds, plate, porcelaines, &c., and after the ceremony her daughter was left under her care for two years more.

In many ways it is probable that no one was more capable of giving a first-rate education than Mme. de Genlis, who had herself so much knowledge and experience, such superior talents and genuine love of art, books and study. She was also careful and strict in the religious education of her pupils, and perfectly free from any of the atheistic opinions of the day.

But her practice cannot be said to have been altogether in accordance with all the professions and talk about virtue and duty, which she made such a parade.

She was so talked about with the Duc de Chartres that the Queen would not receive her at her balls,¹ for Marie Antoinette was trying to bring some reform into the licence prevalent at court, where there was no end to the scandalous incidents that kept happening.

One or two of the gentlemen-in-waiting were found stealing the valuable *porcelaines de Sèvres* in the ante-rooms, to the great anger of the King.

A gentleman of the court came home late one night, and could not get into his wife's room, because the maid, who slept in an ante-room, could or would not be awakened. As he was going very early in the morning to hunt, he

¹ "Souvenirs de Marie Antoinette," t. ii. p. 164 (Ctsse. d'Adhémar).

changed his clothes in a hurry without going to bed, and on arriving at the place of meeting was greeted by his friends with a shout of laughter, and inquiries if he wished to exchange his hunting dress for the costume of the Queen's pages; as he had put on in haste and half-darkness the *haut-de-chausse* of one of them, which certainly had no business to be in his room.

Like many other persons, Mme. de Genlis, though she chose to act in a way that she must have known to be suspicious, even if there had been no real harm in it, made a great outcry when the remarks were made, and conclusions drawn that might have naturally been expected.

She posed as a victim, talked of jealousy, slander, ingratitude, &c., and went on with her intimacy with the Duc de Chartres, who was at that time engaged in the most abominable intrigues and secret attacks upon the Royal Family, especially the Queen; and whether rightly or wrongly, Mme. de Genlis was supposed to be mixed up with them.

There had been no disunion or quarrel between her and the Comte de Genlis; they had always been attached to one another, and no break occurred between them; she continued to be devotedly loved by Mme. de Puisieux, whose death she now had to lament.

But all kinds of stories were in circulation about her, which, of course, she indignantly denied. One of them concerned the marriage she now made for her second daughter with M. de Valence, a man of

high rank, large fortune, and remarkably bad character, who, moreover, had been for years, and continued to be, the lover of her aunt, Mme. de Montesson. It was positively declared that the Duke of Orléans, going unexpectedly into the room, found Valence on his knees before Mme. de Montesson, who with instant presence of mind, exclaimed—

“See this absurd Valence, on his knees to me, asking for the hand of my niece.”

“And why not grant it?”

“Can I grant it without consulting you?”

“Well! we will promise it him; yes, we will promise him.”

And the marriage was decided.

Mme. de Genlis in her “Memoirs” denies this story, but goes on to say with that half candour, which is perhaps the most deceptive, that she cannot but confess that her ambition overruled her in this matter; that she thought what was said about Mme. de Montesson and M. de Valence might not be true, or if it were, this marriage would put an end to the *liaison*; and what seems contradictory, that she believed the reason her aunt was so eager for the marriage was, that she thought it would be a means of attaching to her for ever the man she loved. But that her daughter had great confidence in her, and would be guided by her in the way she should behave.

Now Mme. de Genlis had without the least doubt many good and distinguished qualities, and as we all know, human nature is fallible and inconsistent; but it would surely have been better that a woman,

who could coolly and deliberately arrange such a marriage for her young daughter, simply and solely from reasons of worldly ambition, should not talk so much about disinterested virtue, contempt of riches, and purity of motives.

It is probable that she deceived herself more than she did other people, and her life in fact, between the Duke and Duchess and their children, could not have been anything but a constant course of deception.

Mme. de Genlis, however she might blind herself, must have known quite well the real character of Philippe-Égalité, and if she had all the desire she professed for the virtue and welfare of her pupils, she can hardly have thought that the example of one of the most dissipated scoundrels in France, whose health, as she owns, was early impaired by his vices, would be desirable for them to follow.

But yet she took every opportunity of impressing his virtues upon them, telling them what an excellent father they had, and insidiously winning their affection away from their mother, under the form and pretence of the deepest respect and submission.

The marriages of her daughters which had so delighted her ambition, had not brought her all the happiness she expected.

Mme. de Lawoestine, the elder one, whom she describes as an angelic creature in whom no fault could be seen, died at one and twenty in her confinement. It was a terrible shock to her, and, it appears, also to the husband, although the contents of certain tablets of his wife's, which he found and gave to Mme. de Genlis some days

after her death, would seem to imply that he would not be inconsolable.

One cannot help seeing in the sentiments expressed and the manner of expressing them, the artificial, affected tone which with Mme. de Genlis had become her second nature, and which she had evidently inculcated into her daughter.

The tablets had two columns, over one of which was written, "Calculations of the infidelities of my husband during the five years of our marriage." They were written down year by year, and when all added up, came to twenty-one.

Over the other column was written, "Let us see mine," and these were represented by a column of noughts. At the bottom was written, "Total : Satisfaction ! !"

"And she really loved her husband !" exclaimed Mme. de Genlis in a fervour of admiration.

Countless were the inconsistencies of the faddists of the party to which she belonged, and in the crotchets of which she had educated her daughter, but what duty or reason or "satisfaction" could there be in such a calculation as this ?

And what could be more contradictory to the jargon about Nature, whose guidance, impulses, feelings, &c., were to be so implicitly obeyed, than the spectacle of a woman in the height of her youth and beauty, loving her husband, and yet amusing herself by writing in her pocket-book in this cold-blooded manner, a long list of his infidelities and ending by expressing her satisfaction ?

As to the other daughter, Mme. de Valence, her marriage had turned out just as might have been

foretold by any one of common sense. M. de Valence did not change his conduct in the least, he was still one of the most dissipated men in Paris though he never stooped to the dishonour of Philippe-Égalité. He remained always the favourite of Mme. de Montesson, who at her death left her whole fortune to him.

Mme. de Valence seems to have accepted the situation, but by no means with the Griselda-like "satisfaction" of her sister. Very soon her reputation much resembled that of her husband, and many were the anecdotes told to illustrate the manners and customs of their *ménage*.

Calling one day upon Mme. de Montesson, Mme. de Valence was told by a new servant who did not know her, that Mme. de Montesson could not be seen; she never received any one when M. de Valence was there.

"I am sorry for that," she observed, as she gave her cards to the man, "especially as M. de Valence is my husband."

De Valence was very handsome and a brave soldier; he emigrated but refused to fight against France; returned, obtained the favour of Napoleon, and retained that of Mme. de Montesson, who more than once paid his debts. He was supposed to be the son of a mistress whom his father adored, and to have been substituted for a dead child born to his father's wife, who always suspected the truth, never would acknowledge him as her son, nor leave him more money than she could help doing as she had no other children.

Speaking of Pulchérie in her journal, Mme. de

Genlis, it may be remarked, does not venture to lavish upon her the unstinted praises which she pours upon her sister ; but remarks that when she left her care and entered society on her marriage, she had the most excellent ideas and sentiments, the purest mind, and the highest principles possible.

It does not seem to occur to her that it was she herself who caused the destruction of all this purity and principle by giving her child to a man of notoriously bad character ; but without taking any blame to herself she goes on to say that Pulchérie was, and always would be in her eyes, gentle, sweet-tempered, kind-hearted, and easy to live with—which she probably was.

CHAPTER VI

Death of the Duc d'Orléans—M. de Genlis—Sillery—Coming of the Revolution—The Bastille—Anger of the Duchesse d'Orléans—Dissensions.

THE Duke of Orléans died 1785, and Mme. de Montesson, having been forbidden by Louis XVI. to put her household into mourning or assume the position of a Duchess Dowager of Orléans, retired for a few weeks into a convent and then returned to her usual life, having inherited a great fortune from the late Duke.

Philippe-Égalité was now Duc d'Orléans, and his eldest son Duc de Chartres. That young prince was about seventeen, and like all the Orléans family, except the Duchess and the Comte de Beaujolais, was thoroughly indoctrinated with the detestable spirit that prevailed at the Palais Royal.

The Maréchale d'Etrée, daughter of M. de Puisieux, died, and left all her large fortune, not to the spendthrift Marquis de Genlis, but to the Count, who, finding himself now very rich, wished to retire from the Palais Royal and live on his estates, and tried to induce his wife to accompany him. He said with truth that her proper and natural place

was with him, and he tried by all means in his power to persuade her to do what one would suppose a person constantly talking of duty, virtue, self-sacrifice, and the happiness of retirement, would not have hesitated about.

That she persistently refused proves how much all these professions were worth, and this time she does in her memoirs blame herself for her conduct ; in fact, she declares that she felt ever afterwards a remorse that never left her, and that would be eternal ; as she considered herself the cause of the death of her husband. If she had gone with him as he entreated her to do and as she acknowledged that she ought to have done, she could have induced him to leave France with her, he had sufficient money to enable them to live comfortably abroad, and his life would have been saved.

However, she refused to leave Belle Chasse, influenced by affection for her pupils, jealous of any one who might succeed her with them, fear of losing the prestige of having educated them, as she says ; and, of course, of being separated from the Duc d'Orléans, which she does not say. At any rate she took her own way, and after a journey to England where she was extremely well received, she resumed her usual occupations. The Revolution was drawing nearer and nearer, though people did not realise its approach. A few more far-seeing persons foretold troubles and dangers in the future, but nobody except the well-known Cazotte, had any notion of the fearful tempest about to break over the unhappy kingdom of France.

Meanwhile, many who would have shrunk from

the crimes and horrors for which in their folly they were preparing the way as fast as possible, went on playing with fire, by encouraging the disloyalty that was in the air, sympathising with the outrageous demands put forward by the Radical leaders, circulating libels and inventing lying stories against the Queen and royal family, joining noisily in the abuse of everything that had hitherto been held sacred or respectable, and doing everything in their power to inflame the evil passions and excite the cupidity and violence of the mob.

One cannot help feeling intense satisfaction in reflecting that most of those who did all this mischief, at any rate, suffered for it, when the danger, ruin, and death they had prepared for others came upon themselves. One of the most abominable of the revolutionists, who had fallen under the displeasure of his friends and been condemned by them to be guillotined with his young son, begged to be allowed to embrace him on the scaffold ; but the boy sullenly refused, saying, " No ; it is you who have brought me to this."

Among the Palais Royal set, it was the fashion to find fault with everything done by the royalists, to go as seldom as possible to Versailles and to pretend to find it a great bore when it was necessary to do so.

If a play was popular at Versailles it was sure to be hissed at Paris ; a disgraced minister was the idol of the mob ; the only liveries not insulted were those of Orléans.

For the Duc d'Orléans was aiming at the crown, and it is impossible to believe Mme. de Genlis was

not aware of it. He suggested to the Queen that Madame Royale should be married to his eldest son, which proposal Marie Antoinette decidedly refused, remarking afterwards that to marry her daughter to the Duc de Chartres would be to sign the death warrant of her son.¹

Mme. de Genlis states that one evening while the States-General were sitting, the Duc d'Orléans, who was in her *salon*, declared that they would be of no use and do nothing; not even suppress the *lettres de cachet*. Mme. de Genlis and the Duc de Lauzun were of a different opinion, and they bet each other fifty *louis* on the subject. The bet was put into writing and Mme. de Genlis showed it to more than fifty people of her acquaintance, all of whom declared a Revolution to be impossible. The Abbé Cesutti, one of the free-thinking school, was editor of a paper called *La feuille villageoise*, intended for the people. He asked Mme. de Genlis to write for it, and she sent some papers called "The Letters of Marie-Anne," in which she introduced doctrines and principles of religion. Soon after the Abbé came and asked her in future only to speak of morality and never to mention religion. Knowing what that meant she declined to write any more for that paper.

However, she was so far identified with the Revolutionary party as not only to rejoice at the infamous attack of the mob upon the Bastille, but to consent to her pupils' request to take them to

¹ It does not, however, appear why this should have been the consequence of the marriage, for Madame Royale would not have succeeded to the throne in any case.

Paris to see the mob finishing the destruction of that beautiful and historic monument.

In the "Souvenirs," written in after years, when her ideas and principles had been totally changed by her experience of the Revolution, the beginning of which had so delighted her, she was evidently ashamed of the line she had taken, and anxious to explain it away as far as possible.

"I was of no party," she writes, "but that of religion. I desired the reform of certain abuses, and I saw with joy the demolition of the Bastille, the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, and *droits de chasse*. That was all I wanted, my politics did not go farther than that. At the same time no one saw with more grief and horror than I, the excesses committed from the first moments of the taking of the Bastille. . . . The desire to let my pupils see everything led me on this occasion into imprudence, and caused me to spend some hours in Paris to see from the Jardin de Beaumarchais the people of Paris demolishing the Bastille. I also had a curiosity to see the Cordeliers Club. . . . I went there and I saw the orators, cobblers, and porters with their wives and mistresses, mounting the tribune and shouting against nobles, priests, and rich people. . . . I remarked a fishwoman . . ." This pretty spectacle to which she was said to have taken her pupils, was, of course, approved of by the Duke of Orléans, who made the Duc de Chartres a member of the Jacobin Club, "by the wish of the Duc d'Orléans, assuredly not by mine; but, however, it must be remembered that that society was not then what it afterward became,

although its sentiments were already very exaggerated. However, it was a pretext employed to estrange the Duchess of Orléans from me."

And small wonder! Was the Duchess of Orléans—a woman of saintly character and the great granddaughter¹ of Louis XIV.—to tolerate the governess of her children being seen in a den of blasphemy and low, unspeakable vice and degradation like the Cordeliers Club, or their being themselves shown with rejoicing a scene of horror and murder, and join in the triumph of ruffians who were attacking their religion, and the King and Queen, who were also their own cousins? Was it possible that anybody in their senses would tolerate such a governess? Added to which the Duchess was now aware of the terms on which Mme. de Genlis and the Duke stood to each other. It could no longer be said of her—

"The Duchess sees nothing, or will not see anything, but even shows a strange predilection for Mme. de Genlis, which made Mme. de Barbantane say that it is a love² which would make one believe in witchcraft.

The Duc de Penthièvre, who knew his son-in-law and distrusted Mme. de Genlis, foresaw what would happen and opposed her entrance into the Palais Royal; but the influence of Mme. de Montesson had prevailed, and she was soon not only all-powerful herself, but had placed the different members of her family in lucrative posts

¹ Her father, the Duc de Penthièvre, was the son of the Comte de Toulouse, illegitimate son of Louis XIV. by Mme. de Montespan.

² Talleyrand, "Mémoires," t. I, p. 164.

there. And, though they did not follow their party to the extreme excesses to which they were already tending, they were, so far, all tarred with the same brush.

In the "Memoirs of Louis XVIII," he remarks, after the dismissal of Necker: "A report was spread that the Queen and the Comte d'Artois had given orders for a general massacre, to include the Duke of Orléans, M. Necker, and most of the members of the National Assembly. Sillery, Latouche, Laclos, Voidel, Ducrest,¹ Camille Desmoulin, and all those who came from the Duc d'Orléans, were the first to spread these lies."²

After her proceedings at the Bastille and the Cordeliers, and considering her connection with the revolutionary party, Mme. de Genlis (or Sillery, as she was also called) need not have expressed the surprise and indignation she did at the arrival of a body of police to search her house for arms, reported to be stored there. They were sent by La Fayette, who had done even more mischief than she had; but for some reason they did not like each other. The touchy, conceited Republican poet, Marie Joseph Chénier, who ranted against religion, royalty, and everything and everybody superior to himself, began to make love to Mme. de Genlis, and when she objected to his impertinent familiarity, said furiously: "You are right; I am

¹ M. Ducrest, however, resigned all his appointments at the Palais Royal when he realised the excesses into which Philippe-Egalité was proceeding, gave up his appointment of Chancellor to the House of Orléans, left France before the worst time had come, and went to America.

² "Mémoires de Louis XVIII," t. 4, p. 231.

neither a *grand seigneur* nor a duke!"—which specimen of the manners of her party disgusted her extremely. In her "Memoires" she relates of this worthy that he was accused of having participated in the condemnation of his brother André, also a poet, executed under the Terror. This was, however, almost certainly untrue, but it was said that he could have saved him if he had made use of the influence he possessed with the Terrorists, but that he either feared or did not care to do so. The celebrated actress, Mlle. Dumesnil, then old and infirm, received one day a visit from him, during which he tormented her to recite something for him. She was ill in bed, but nevertheless he went on begging that she would recite only one line that he might say he had heard her, when, turning towards him with a violent effort she said—

"Approchez-vous, Néron, et prenez votre place!"

The first personal encounter of Mme. de Genlis with the Revolution was one afternoon in 1790. She had driven with Mademoiselle d'Orléans, the Comte de Beaujolais, Henriette de Sercey, and Pamela, to a village about twelve miles from Paris, where, unluckily, a fair was going on and a great many people collected together. They took it into their heads that the party were the Queen, Madame Royale, and the Dauphin trying to escape, and, surrounding them with anger, forced them to get out of the carriage and refused to believe their explanations.

A young lieutenant of the *Garde-Nationale* hurried up, harangued them, and with difficulty persuaded

the savage crowd to allow him to take them into his own house, around which a drunken, furious crowd kept guard while cries of "*A la lanterne!*" were every now and then heard. They would not believe anything they said ; they threatened to hang any one who should go to Paris to make inquiries ; they forced their way into the house and garden, but suddenly a friendly voice said in the ear of Mme. de Genlis : " I was a gamekeeper at Sillery ; don't be afraid. I will go to Paris." At last the crowd of ruffians dispersed, leaving a dozen to guard their prisoners ; the mayor of the village gravely demanded that all her papers should be delivered to him, upon which Mme. de Genlis gave him four or five letters, and when she begged him to read them he replied that he could not read, but took them away.

At five o'clock in the morning the gamekeeper came back from Paris with an order of release from the municipality, and at half-past six they arrived at Belle Chasse.

This foretaste of the Revolution Mme. de Genlis did not like at all, and she began to think she would rather not be in France now that the plans and friends so lately her admiration were succeeding so well.

Just then her mother died after a short illness, which was a great shock to her ; she had lived with or near her for many years since the death of her second husband, and had been the object of her devoted care.

But now at last an end had come to the Palais Royal life of prosperity and power.

The patience of the Duchess of Orléans, which had for many years been so extraordinary, and her blindness, which had been the wonder of everybody, had for more than a year been worn out, and now had come to a decided conclusion.

There is such a thing as being too angelic, and gentle, and unsuspecting. If those who have to live in the world go about acting as if other people were angels instead of men and women, believing all they are told, trusting every one, and knowing as little as they can of what is going on around them, no good ever comes of it.

How the Duchess could ever consent to and approve of her children being entirely given up to the care of a woman whose principles were absolutely opposed to her own, is astonishing indeed; and perhaps it is still more so that for many years she did notice the infatuation of her husband, and the vast influence Mme. de Genlis had over him. But her eyes had at last been opened, Mme. de Genlis declares, by a Mme. de Chastellux, who was her enemy, and was jealous of her. However that might be with regard to the connection between Mme. de Genlis and the Duc d'Orléans, no enlightenment was necessary about the Bastille, the Cordeliers Club, and other revolutionary proceedings. That was surely quite enough; besides which the Duchess had long been awakened to the fact that the governess about whom she had been so infatuated had not only carried on an intrigue with and established an all-powerful influence over her husband, but had extended that influence also over her children to such an extent

that her daughter at any rate, if not her two elder sons, probably preferred her to their mother.

As to the Comte de Beaujolais, he was fond of her, as all her pupils were, for she was extremely kind to them, but he hated and abhorred the principles which his father and she had succeeded in instilling into his brothers and sister, longed to fight for the King and Queen, and took the first opportunity when he met the Comte de Provence in exile to tell him so and make his submission ; he had sent him messages of explanation and loyalty directly he could. For more than a year, then, there had been coldness and estrangement between the Duchess and Mme. de Genlis, who, of course, as usual, posed as an injured saint. What had she done ? Why this cruel change in the affection and confidence of years ? Had she not sacrificed herself to her pupils ? Was she not the last person to alienate their affection from their illustrious and admirable mother ? Did not all the virtues of her whole life forbid her being suspected or distrusted in any way ?

She wrote pages and pages to the Duchess, who would not answer the letters except by a few short lines, and refused to enter into the matter at all, but declined to receive Mme. de Genlis at the Palais Royal to dine as usual. Here is an example of what the Duchesse d'Abrantès and others have said about Mme. de Genlis having nothing of the dignity that she might have been expected to possess. Her behaviour contrasts strongly with that of the Duchesse d'Orléans, who, however foolish and credulous she may have been, showed at any rate

that she was a Princess of France. It was not for her to discuss or dispute with Mme. de Genlis about her influence with her husband and children ; it was for her to give orders and for the governess of her children to obey them. But these late proceedings were different and tangible, and Mme. de Genlis herself owns in her "Mémoires," written long after, that the objections of the Duchess, which she then thought so exaggerated and unjust, were right and well-founded. She declares that she had no idea how far the Revolution would go, that she was strongly attached to the Monarchy and to religion, which latter was certainly true, and there is no reason to suppose she contemplated a Republic, while the horrors that took place were odious to her.

But that she should have been and still be accused, especially with regard to the Duke of Orléans, she had no right to complain. After all, those who wish to play the world's game must play by the world's rules. Certain ways of acting always cause certain conclusions to be drawn, and what else was likely between a man like Philippe-Égalité and a fascinating woman he admired, and with whom he was thrown into constant and intimate association, but the *liaison* every one might expect, and which it is impossible not to believe in.

She declared that she would have resigned before had it not been for the *calumnies, injustice, and persecution (!)* carried on against the Duc d'Orléans ; she hoped his return would dispel the clouds ; she pictured the grief her pupils would feel, &c., &c.

The Duke was at his wits' end, there were

scenes and interviews and negotiations without end, but he and Mme. de Genlis were forced to give way.

The Duchess threatened a separation, the position was impossible ; Mme. de Genlis withdrew, at any rate for a time, intending to go to England. But Mademoiselle d'Orléans, who was then thirteen, and devoted to her governess, when she found she was gone, cried and fretted till she became so ill that every one was alarmed ; she was sent for to come back again, and did so on condition that they should go to England together as soon as it could be arranged.

She was herself most anxious to get out of France, but in spite of her representations the journey kept being put off on various excuses until the autumn, when one day M. de Valence, who had also a post in the Palais Royal, told her that the Duke was going to England that night, which he did, leaving her a note saying he would be back in a month.

However, he stayed a year, much to the surprise of Mme. de Genlis, in the first place that he should have kept her in ignorance of his plans, and in the second that he should break his promise to her. His flight had also the result of preventing their journey, for it had irritated the mob, who were now, under their brutal and ferocious leaders, the rulers of France, and they watched with suspicion all the rest of the Orléans family ; it would not have been safe for them to attempt to travel. Such was the freedom already achieved by the efforts of their father and his friends.

It was naturally impossible that Mme. de Genlis should be a conspicuous member of the Orléans household and yet not mix herself up with intimacies and friendships amongst the Revolutionists, especially as some of them at that time had not shown themselves in their true colours. She corresponded with Barèze, who wrote to her about her books, and whose letters were full of the simple life of the peasants and the beauties of nature in the Pyrenees, but who soon developed into one of the monsters of the Terror. She could not be blamed for that, as she did not know his real character; but the same cannot be said with regard to her friendship with Pétion, whom she received in her *salon* and for whom she declared that up to the time of the King's murder she had "a true esteem." Now Pétion was a vulgar, brutal ruffian, as any one knows who has read the account of his behaviour during the miserable affair of the return of the royal family from Varennes; and yet after that she accepted his escort to England, and said that she "remained persuaded that he had a most honest, upright soul, and the most virtuous principles." There are some people who make the very names of virtue and duty obnoxious to one, and of this number was certainly Mme. de Genlis. In spite of her outcries about the injustice and falsehood of the suspicions and odium attached to her concerning her conduct at this time, and causing her afterwards considerable annoyance and difficulties, her friendships with and praises of such characters as Philippe-Égalité, Pétion, and others, added to the way in

which she displayed her rejoicing in the earlier excesses of the Revolutionary party, and her constant association with the authors of the disgraceful libels and attacks upon the Queen and royal family, amply justified whatever might be said against her.

There can be no doubt that, as always happens in these cases, a great deal was said that was neither true nor possible. It was inevitable that it should be so ; but her way of going on, both politically and in other ways, was decidedly suspicious.

At length the Duke of Orléans came back, and in consequence of the persuasions of Mme. de Genlis he arranged that his daughter should be ordered by the doctors to take the waters at Bath, and they set off; Mademoiselle d'Orléans, Mme. de Genlis, Pamela, and Henriette de Sercery, with their attendants, furnished with a passport permitting them to stay in England as long as the health of Mademoiselle d'Orléans required. They started October 11, 1791, slept at Calais, and remained a few days in London in the house the Duc d'Orléans had bought there ; they went to Bath, where they stayed for two months.

They next made a tour about England, including Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Derbyshire, Cambridge, several visits to different country houses, and to the Ladies of Llangollen.

CHAPTER VII

In England—Sheridan—Strange adventure—Raincy—Farewell to Philippe-Égalité—Proscribed—Tournay—Pamela—Death of the King.

WHILE Mme. de Genlis was safe and enjoying herself in England terrible events were happening in France. The Duke of Orléans, already infamous in the eyes of all decent people, was beginning to lose his popularity with the revolutionists. "He¹ could not doubt the discredit into which he had fallen, the flight of his son² exposed him to dangerous suspicions; it was decided to get rid of him. He had demanded that his explanations should be admitted, but he was advised to 'ask rather, in the interest of your own safety, for a decree of banishment for yourself and your family.'

"I have said before, I think, that the Comte de Beaujolais did not share the opinions of his family, and I have pleasure in quoting a paragraph on this subject written by Marie Antoinette in a letter to her sister the Archduchess Christine, governess of the Low Countries.

"The young Comte de Beaujolais, in the inno-

¹ "Memoires de Louis XVIII.," t. v. p. 326.

² The Duc de Chartres.

cence of his soul, has always remained a Bourbon, and this amiable boy feels a tender sympathy for my misfortunes. The other day he sent me in secret a person named Alexandre, a *valet de chambre* of good education. This worthy man, whose open expression impressed me in his favour, knelt down when he came near me, wiped away some tears and gave me a letter from the young prince, in which I found the most touching words and the purest sentiments. The good Alexandre begged me to keep this a profound secret, and told me that the Comte de Beaujolais often talked of escaping from his father and dying in arms for the defence of his King.

“ ‘ How I regret that the death of this young prince deprived me of the happiness of opening the gates of France to him and rewarding his noble sentiments.’ ”¹

The Duc de Chartres now also looked with disapproval upon his father's conduct. In his “*Mémoire's*” Louis XVIII. quotes a letter of M. de Boissy, who says that the only republican amongst the sons of *Égalité* was the Duc de Montpensier.²

The latter part of the sojourn of Mme. de Genlis in England was overshadowed by anxieties, annoyances, and fears.

Like all other nations, the English were horror-stricken at the crimes and cruelties going on in France, and exasperated against their perpetrators, more especially against the Duke of Orléans, who was regarded with universal hatred and contempt.

¹ “*Memoires de Louis XVIII.*,” t. v. p. 327-8.

² *Ibid.*, t. v. p. 287.

The general indignation was extended to all who had, or were believed to have, any complicity in the horrors committed, or any connection with the miscreants who were guilty of them; and now Mme. de Genlis began to feel the consequences of the line of conduct she had chosen to adopt.

Anonymous letters filled with abuse and threats poured in upon her; she was told the house would be set on fire in the night, she heard her name cried in the streets, and on sending out for the newspaper being sold, she saw a long story about herself and M. de Calonne, giving the history of an interview they had at Paris the preceding evening! She sent it to Sheridan, who was a friend of hers, begging him to write to the paper saying that she did not know Calonne, and had not been at Paris for many months, which he did.

Of course she thought all these denunciations most unjust and astonishing. Why, she asked, should they call her a "savage fury," and abuse her in this way?

"I never carried on a single intrigue. I loved the Monarchy, and I spared no efforts to soften and moderate M. le Duc d'Orléans," not realising that the way to escape suspicion was not to try to soften, but to have nothing to do with him; and that if she loved the Monarchy she had shown her affection in a very strange manner. But she was a strange mixture of great talents and many good qualities with frivolity, inconsistency, and shallowness. For example, when she was told that the Monarchy (which she says she loved) had fallen, and the Republic been declared, her first exclamation was—

“Eh ! What ! Then *Athalie* will never be played any more ; that masterpiece will be lost to the French stage !”

Seeing in the French papers that a party, with sinister intentions, were agitating for the trial of the King and Queen, Mme. de Genlis wrote a letter of six pages to Pétion remonstrating, advising, and quoting the ancient Romans who did not murder the Tarquins but only banished them. The letter was published, but of course did no good, but drew upon her the hatred of the Terrorists.

The King and Queen were doomed. Even so late as between the 20th of June and the 10th of August, there was a last chance of escape, a plot for their flight, each one separately. They might, or *some* of them might, have escaped. One cannot help fancying that the children at any rate might have been saved ; they could not have been so well known and might so well have been disguised. This was spoilt by the Queen, who refused to be separated from the Dauphin. After that there was no hope.

Just after the September massacres Mme. de Genlis received a letter from the Duc d'Orléans desiring her to bring his daughter back to France at once, to which she replied that she should do nothing of the sort, and that it would be absurd to choose such a time for entering France.

She heard there was a plot to carry off Mademoiselle d'Orléans, which made her uneasy, and several other things happened which rather alarmed her.

Early in November the Duc d'Orléans sent

M. Maret with a summons to Mme. de Genlis either to bring Mademoiselle back to France or to give her into his care as her escort. Mme. de Genlis, not liking to desert the young girl, though most unwilling to return to France, agreed to accompany her, and before they left, Sheridan, who had fallen violently in love with Pamela, proposed to her and was accepted. It was settled that they should be married in a fortnight, when Mme. de Genlis expected to be back in England.

It was not a marriage that promised much happiness. Sheridan was forty-six and a confirmed spendthrift. He was a widower, and the extraordinary likeness of Pamela to his first wife had struck him. Not that his first marriage had been altogether successful, for his wife had, after a time, had a *liaison* with Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

They started at ten in the morning in two carriages, the first with six horses, the second, which contained the servants, with four. They had only two men, one French servant of their own, the other hired for the occasion, as they had sent four back to Paris. Their servant, Darnal, observed after a time that they were not going along the Dover road, by which he had been before, and pointed this out to Mme. de Genlis, who spoke to the postillions. They made some excuse, assuring her that they would get back on to the road, but they did nothing of the kind but went on at a rapid pace, saying they would soon be at a village called Dartford, which for a time reassured Mme. de Genlis. However, they did not arrive at Dartford, and presently two well-dressed men passed on foot and called out in distinct French—

“*Mesdames*, you are being deceived, they are not taking you to Dover.”

It was difficult to make the postillions stop, but after a time Darnal forced them to do so, assisted by the cries of the terrified travellers who were then passing through a village. The strange servant did nothing. They got out, and on asking how far they were from Dartford they were told twenty-two miles.

Mme. de Genlis hired a man from the village to go with them, and with his help and that of Darnal forced the postillions, who were very insolent, to return to London.

Sheridan took the matter up, the postillions were examined, but all they said was that a strange gentleman had taken them to a public-house and bribed them to take the road they had followed. The hired servant had disappeared. Not wishing to spend the time or money necessary to bring this mysterious affair into a law court, they did nothing more about it, and never understood why it had happened, or what was intended, or anything concerning it.

They stayed a month with Sheridan at Isleworth, and then he saw them off at Dover, and they landed safely in France. Immense crowds assembled to greet Mademoiselle d'Orléans, but at Chantilly they were met by a messenger of the Duke, who gave Mme. de Genlis a note saying—

“If you have not crossed yet, stay in England till fresh orders; if my *courrier* meets you on the road in France wait wherever you are and do not come to Paris. A second *courrier* will instruct you what to do.”

Paying no attention to this order, Mme. de Genlis continued her journey to Belle Chasse, where she found her husband, the Duke, and five or six others.

An air of gloom was over them all. Mademoiselle d'Orléans was crying bitterly. Mme. de Genlis, as she restored her to her father's care, in the presence of the rest, told him that she resigned her post of governess, and should start for England the next morning.

The Duke with an air of consternation asked her to come into another room alone with him, and there with much embarrassment told her that his daughter, who was now fifteen, was by a new law placed in the list of *emigrées* for not having returned at the time appointed ; that it was her fault for not bringing her back when he first sent for her ; that he was sure to be able to make it all right by getting her placed in a list of exceptions to be made, but that meantime she must go and wait in some neutral country ; that he implored Mme. de Genlis to take her to Tournay ; that the decree of exception would certainly be out in a week, and then he would come himself and fetch his daughter, and she (Mme. de Genlis) should be free.

She replied that she would go to Tournay on condition that if the decree was not out in a fortnight, the Duke would send some one else to take her place with his daughter, which he promised to do.

M. de Sillery (Comte de Genlis) proposed that they should go to his box at the theatre to cheer their spirits. Among the audience was Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who, on seeing Pamela, was struck, as

Sheridan had been, with her extraordinary likeness to Mrs. Sheridan, and like him, fell in love with her, and got a friend to present him in their box.

The next morning they went to Raincy, where the Duke and M. de Sillery spent the whole of the day with them. The infatuation between the Duke and Mme. de Genlis seems to have been at an end, if we may trust her account of that last day.

“He seemed,” she says, “*distrain*, gloomy, and preoccupied, with a strange expression which had something sinister in his face; he walked up and down from one room to another, as if he dreaded conversation or questions. The day was fine. I sent Mademoiselle, my niece, and Pamela into the garden; M. de Sillery followed: I found myself alone with M. le Duc d’Orléans. Then I said something about his situation, he hastily interrupted me and said brusquely that he had pledged himself to the Jacobins. I replied that after all that had happened it was a crime and a folly; that he would be their victim. . . . I advised him to emigrate with his family to America. The Duke smiled disdainfully and answered as he had often done before, that I was well worth being consulted and listened to when it was a question of historical or literary matters, but that I knew nothing about politics. . . . The conversation became heated, then angry, and suddenly he left me. In the evening I had a long interview with M. de Sillery. I entreated him with tears to leave France; it would have been easy for him to get away and to take with him at least a hundred thousand francs. He listened with emotion; told me he abhorred all the excesses of

the Revolution, but that I took too gloomy a view of the outlook. Robespierre and his party were too mediocre to keep their ascendancy long; all the talent and capacity was among the moderates, who would soon re-establish order and morality (they were all put to death soon afterwards); and that he considered it criminal for an honest man to leave France at this moment, as he thereby deprived his country of one more voice for reason and humanity. I insisted, but in vain. He spoke of the Duke of Orléans, saying that in his opinion he was lost, because he was placing all his hopes in the Jacobins, who delighted in degrading him in order to destroy him more easily. . . ."

"We started the next morning; M. le Duc gave me his arm to the carriage; I was much agitated, Mademoiselle burst into tears, her father was pale and trembling. When I was in the carriage he stood in silence by the door with his eyes fixed upon me; his gloomy, sorrowful look seeming to implore pity.

"*Adieu, Madame!*" he said; and the changed tone of his voice so increased my agitation that I could not speak. I held out my hand which he took and pressed tightly in his; then, turning hastily to the postillions he signed to them, and we started."

M. de Sillery, M. Ducrest, and the Duc de Chartres went with them to the frontier of Belgium; and they arrived safely at Tournay, where they were followed by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who was eager to marry Pamela. And now, as before, he was the successful rival of Sheridan, whom

she threw over for his sake. They were married at Tournay and departed to England, where she was received with great kindness by his family.

Weeks passed away and still no one came from the Duc d'Orléans; Mme. de Genlis wrote several times, and he always begged her to wait a few days longer.

The Duc de Chartres came and joined them at Tournay, where Mademoiselle d'Orléans was taken dangerously ill with a bilious fever. She recovered slowly, but in January, 1793, letters from France brought the news of the execution of Louis XVI., of the infamous part played by Philippe-Égalité, and of the imminent danger of M. de Sillery.

The Duc de Chartres was horror-stricken at the crime, at his father's share in it, and at the hypocritical letter in which he excused his baseness, speaking of his lacerated heart, his sacrifice to liberty, and the welfare of France, &c.

Very different was the letter of M. de Sillery. He, at any rate, if he had been wrong and mistaken, was ready and willing to pay the penalty.

He sent a number of the printed copies of his "opinion on the King's trial," desiring that some might be forwarded to England. It was as follows :

"I do not vote for his death; first, because he does not deserve it; secondly, because we have no right to judge him; thirdly, because I look upon his condemnation as the greatest political fault that could be committed." He ended his letter by saying that he knew quite well that he had signed his own death-warrant, and, beside himself

with horror and indignation, he actually went to the Abbaye and gave himself up as a prisoner. It was the act of a madman, for he might very likely have escaped, and his wife consoled herself with the idea that as there was nothing against him he would only suffer a short imprisonment.

Though several members had voted against the murder of the King, he was the only one who had had the courage of his opinions. Condorcet gave as a reason that he disapproved of all capital punishment, the rest made different excuses.

Mme. de Valence, daughter of Mme. de Genlis came to them at Tournay, but very soon had to hurry back to France as the Austrian army was coming up.

Like Mme. Le Brun, Mme. de Genlis had no reason to fear poverty in exile, her writings would always be sufficient to provide for her; but she was just then short of money; and, unfortunately, in her haste, though she had brought with her a good many of her valuable possessions from Belle Chasse, she had left a great deal that she might have taken. Mme. de Valence went to Belle Chasse and saved her piano, some pictures, and various other things which her mother gave to her, the rest were mostly confiscated.

It was very difficult just then to get money from France, and she had even to advance some for Mademoiselle d'Orléans. Remembering what had happened to La Fayette, she was very much afraid of falling into the hands of the Austrians; on the other hand she could not go into France

without a permission, which she was silly enough to ask for, but luckily for herself, could not get.

The Duc de Chartres wrote to his father saying that he never wished to return to France, and wanted to get leave from the Convention to expatriate himself, but the Duke replied that there was no sense in it, and forbade him to write.

The Duc de Montpensier came to Tournay to see his brother and sister and then left for Nice.

CHAPTER VIII

Flight and danger—Mons—Zurich—Zug—The Convent of Bremgarten—Death of M. de Sillery—Of Égalité—Mademoiselle d'Orléans and the Princesse de Conti.

OBLIGED to leave Tournay, they took refuge at a small town called Saint Amand, but they soon found themselves forced to fly from that also, and Mme. de Genlis, alarmed at the dangers and privations evidently before them, began to think that Mademoiselle d'Orléans would be safer without her, in the care of her brother.

The camp of Dumouriez lay close at hand, and he had been very good to them ; but there would probably be fighting very shortly, and it was said that he and many of his officers had been proscribed by the Convention. It would, she thought, be safer for Mademoiselle d'Orléans to go and give herself up at Valenciennes, when she would most likely only be exiled, if that ; than to be taken with Mme. de Genlis, as they would then be sent prisoners to Valenciennes and to the scaffold. And it was a great chance if they could pass the French posts.

However, the tears of Mademoiselle d'Orléans and the entreaties of her brother prevailed ; and at the

last moment she got into the carriage leaving all her luggage behind except her watch and harp. Mme. de Genlis, however, had got hers so could supply her, for they could not wait to pack.

In the carriage were Mademoiselle d'Orléans, Mme. de Genlis, her niece, and M. de Montjoye, a young officer who had escaped from France, and was very sensibly going to live in Switzerland, where he had relations. He spoke German very well, and it was agreed that he should say the others were English ladies he was escorting to Ostende.

They went by lanes and cross-roads which were so bad that the carriage broke down, and they had to wait for an hour and a half in a tavern full of volunteers, who cast sinister glances at them, asked many questions, but finally allowed them to go on. It was very cold, night was approaching, the roads got worse and worse, and at last they had to get out and walk.

After going about three miles they were suddenly arrested by a captain of volunteers whose attention had been attracted by the lantern carried by their guide.

Dissatisfied with their answers, he said he suspected them of being *émigrés* and should take them to Valenciennes. Mme. de Genlis thought they were lost, but with admirable presence of mind, she put her arm within his and walked briskly by his side, chaffing him in an almost unintelligible jargon about his want of politeness, laughing, and appearing quite fearless and indifferent.

Presently he stopped; said it was evident that she was an Englishwoman, that he did not wish

to cause them any further inconvenience ; they could continue their journey, but he advised them to put out the lantern as it might be dangerous. He showed them a bye way by which they could reach the Austrian outposts without meeting any more French troops.

As she left Belgium, Mme. Genlis who, with her faults had also many good qualities, began, she says, to reflect upon the horror of her position.

“I saw for myself personally a future darker than it proved to be ; I felt that party spirit and the misfortune of having been attached to the house of Orléans would expose me to all kinds of calumnies and persecutions ; I resigned myself in submission to Providence, for I knew that I deserved it, because if I had kept my promise to my friend, Mme. de Custine, if I had done my duty and remained with my second mother, Mme. de Puisieux, instead of entering the Palais Royal, or if, at the death of the Maréchale d’Etrée, I had left Belle Chasse as my husband wished, no *émigrée* could have been more peaceful and happy than I in foreign countries ; with the general popularity of my books, my literary reputation, and the social talents I possessed.”

The commandant, Baron Vounianski, received them with great kindness, and suddenly as she raised her veil, exclaimed “Ah, Princess !” At first she feared he recognised Mademoiselle d’Orléans, but soon found out that an extraordinary likeness to a Moravian, Princess von Lansberg, made him suppose her to be that person, and no denial on her part altered his conviction. He gave them a supper

à la Hongroise enough for twenty people, and while it was going on talked of public affairs with violent expressions of hatred and curses against the Duke of Orléans. Mademoiselle d'Orléans grew paler and paler, and Mme. de Genlis was in terror lest she should faint or in any way betray herself, but she did not.

The next morning the Baron himself brought up the tray with their breakfast, still declaring Mme. de Genlis was the Princess, and among the escort he gave them to Mons were two young cadets from Moravia, who had been pages to the Princess, by whom they had been specially recommended to the Baron. They both kissed her hand, and recognised her as Princess von Lansberg.

Mons was full of soldiers, they could only get bad rooms in the inn, and in the night Mademoiselle d'Orléans, who slept in Mme. de Genlis's room, did nothing but cough and moan. Going into the adjoining room to tell her niece, Mme. de Genlis found her in the same state; the girls had both got measles.

Here was a terrible position. They had no maid, the manservant was a new one, the servants of the inn could do nothing to help as the inn was crowded; they could not get a doctor till the evening, or a nurse for four days. Mme. de Genlis, however, understood perfectly well how to treat them, and nursed them till they recovered.

One day, as she was going to fetch the medicine from the doctor, who luckily lived close by, she met upon the stairs the Prince de Lambese. Recognising her at once, he looked at her with

an indignant, contemptuous expression, passed on without speaking and went to the Governor, Baron von Mack, to denounce her, guessing also that the daughter of Philippe-Égalité was with her.

The Prince de Lambese had every reason to abhor Mme. de Genlis. He belonged to the house of Lorraine, was related to Marie Antoinette, and devoted to her. It was he, who, in July, 1789, at the head of the Royal Allemand Regiment, cleared the mob out of the *place Louis XV.*, and galloped with his troops into the Tuileries Gardens. He emigrated and entered the Austrian service.

In Mme. de Genlis he recognised the woman who was supposed to have been concerned in the infamous libels against the Queen ; and who, with the wretched Égalité and his children, was seen watching from the Palais Royal the procession, which, headed by the disloyal La Fayette, and surrounded by the drunken, howling ruffians, his followers, brought the royal family prisoners to Paris.

Baron von Mack came to see them, told Mme. de Genlis they were recognised, but was very kind, said they might stay as long as they liked, and when the two girls were well enough to move, gave them passports to Switzerland.

This journey they made in safety ; though for a few hours they skirted along the French outposts, saw in the distance a village on fire across the Rhine, and heard the continual roar of the guns.

They were thankful indeed to find themselves at Schaffhausen, where they were joined by the Duc de Chartres. It was fortunate for his sister that she did not remain with him ; he had been obliged to

fly with Dumouriez two days after she left, through firing and dangers of all kinds ; and what would have become of a girl of sixteen, in a violent illness, with no one to look after her ?

They stayed at Schaffhausen till they were rested, after seven days' journey, and then proceeded to Zurich, where they thought of establishing themselves. But directly the magistrates heard the now accursed name of Orléans, all negotiations were at an end ; besides which the place was full of *émigrés*, and they could not go out without being insulted and annoyed.

They, therefore, removed to the little town of Zug, on the lake of that name, professing to be an Irish family and living in the strictest retirement. To any one who has seen the little town of Zug, it must, even now, appear remote and retired, but in those days it had indeed the aspect of a refuge forgotten by the world. Sheltered by the mighty Alps, the little town clusters at the foot of the steep slope covered with grass and trees, along the shores of the blue lake. A hundred years ago it must have been an ideal hiding place.

They took a little house in a meadow looking down on the lake, and not even the authorities of the place knew who they were.

Mme. de Genlis, however, found an opportunity of writing to the Duchess of Orléans in France ; the Duke was by this time arrested.

Mme. de Genlis declares that at this time the Duchess was still free, and insinuates that she displayed indifference to her daughter in not replying to her letters.

But Louis XVIII. in his Memoirs says :

"A first decree, dated 4 April (1793), ordered the arrest of Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans, that woman, so virtuous, so worthy of a better fate ; then of Mme. de Montesson, of Mme. de Valence, daughter of Mme. de Genlis, and her children. A special clause added : The *citoyens* Égalité and Sillery cannot leave Paris without permission."¹

And M. Turquan,² in his life of Mme. de Montesson, says :

"Mme. de Montesson was arrested . . . in virtue of a decree of the Convention of 4 April, 1793, . . . and on the 17th . . . was taken to the prison of La Force, from there she was transferred to the Maison d'arrêt Dudreneux, opposite her own *hôtel*. From the windows of her new prison she had the consolation, if it was one, of contemplating her own garden, into which she could no longer put her foot. She had another, less bitter, her *première femme de chambre* would not be separated from her, but followed her to prison, and in spite of many obstacles rendered her many services. . . . This admirable, devoted woman (Mme. Naudet) had left her children to follow her mistress to prison."

It is therefore evident that at the time of which Mme. de Genlis is writing, the middle of May, the Duchess of Orléans was in prison. Also that the Marquis de Sillery, her husband, had not been detained in the Abbaye, as from his letter she had supposed, but was only under supervision till the 7th of April.

¹ "Mémoires de Louis XVIII.," t. v. p. 326.

² "Madame de Montesson," p. 277 (Joseph Turquan).

But with regard to dates Mme. de Genlis is exceedingly inaccurate ; in fact her statements are sometimes impossible. For instance, she says that they left Mons the 13th of April, arriving at Schaffhausen the 26th of May, and that their journey took seven days ! Also that they arrived at Schaffhausen on the 26th of May, and then that they left that place for Zurich on May 6th . . . and went to Zug May 14. At any rate they appear to have been there late in May. The Duchess[†] was then in the prison of the Luxembourg, and the Duke and his two younger sons were imprisoned at Marseilles.

It was no wonder they got neither money nor letters from the Orléans family, but Mme. de Genlis began to be uneasy about money matters. She could not get any remittances either ; and although her writings would certainly ultimately support her, she could take no steps about them while she was afraid to disclose her name.

The story of her exile is indeed a contrast to that of Mme. Le Brun, who, with none of her advantages of rank and fortune, nothing but her own genius, stainless character, and charming personality, was welcomed, *fêted*, and loved in nearly every court in Europe, whose exile was one long triumphant progress, and who found friends and a home wherever she went.

But Mme. de Genlis discovered, when too late, that by her attempts both to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, she had succeeded in making herself detested by both parties ; and now

[†] After the fall of Robespierre and the Convention, the Duchess was released by the Directory and exiled to Spain.

she waited in daily perplexity about money matters, and fear of the recognition which was not long in coming.

They only went out to church and to take country walks, but after a time some *émigrés* arrived at Zug, who, though they did not know them personally, had seen the Duc de Chartres at Versailles, recognised him, and spread the news all over the place.

Mme. de Genlis had before pointed out to him this danger, but he was very anxious to be with his sister, the only one of his nearest relations left to him, and she did not like to press the matter. But he soon saw that they must separate. The magistrates at Zug behaved very well, saying that the little family gave no reason for complaint, on the contrary were kind to the poor, harmless and popular.

But in a few days there were articles about them in the German papers; letters from Berne to the authorities of Zug reproached them for receiving the son and daughter of the infamous *Égalité*; the people of Zug disliked the attention so generally drawn upon them, the chief magistrate became uneasy, and as politely as he could asked them to go away.

It was time. The day before they left a stone was thrown in at the window just where Mademoiselle d'Orléans had been sitting; if it had struck her it might have killed her. It struck her hat which she had hung on the top of a chair. A shower of stones followed, breaking the windows and arousing the Duc de Chartres and their only manservant, who

had gone to bed, and who rushed out into the garden, but only in time to hear the hurrying footsteps of the escaping rascals.

The next day they left Zug. M. de Chartres went to Coire, in the Engadine, where for fifteen months he gave lessons in mathematics in a college under an assumed name, while Mme. de Genlis and her two charges took refuge in a convent near the little town of Bremgarten, where they were admitted through M. de Montesquieu, another of the radical nobles obliged to flee from the tender mercies of his radical friends, of whom they had heard through M. de Montjoye, now living with his relations in Bâle, when he had paid them a visit.

In the convent they were safe and at peace, except for another illness of Mademoiselle d'Orléans, which left her so weak that Mme. de Genlis was afraid to tell her of the execution of her father in the November of 1794. She persuaded her not to read the French papers, telling her they were full of blasphemies and indecencies not fit for her to see. She had already received news of the execution of her husband, M. de Sillery, by which she was prostrated for a time.

Philippe-Égalité had wearied Robespierre with his petitions to be released, and that worthy remarked to Fouquier-Tinville—

“It seems that Égalité is tired of the fish of Marseilles that Milon appreciated so much. He wants to come to Paris.”

“Why prevent his coming back? his affair will be settled all the sooner,” was the answer.¹

¹ “Mémoires de Louis XVIII.,” t. v. p. 329.

It was said that a locksmith, who was executed on the same day, would not get into the same cart with him, fearing that he "might be thought the accomplice of such a man."

Mme. de Genlis put Mademoiselle d'Orléans into mourning, telling her that it was for the Queen, which she must of course wear, and it was some time before she discovered the truth.

She had written to ask a refuge of her uncle, the Duke of Modena, who sent her some money, but said political reasons prevented his receiving her in his duchy. The poor child, naturally merry and high-spirited, had grown quiet and sad, though she bore without complaining the hardships of her lot.

At last they heard that the Princesse de Conti was living near Fribourg, and it was arranged that she should take charge of her niece. She wrote an affectionate letter, and sent the Comtesse de Saint-Maurice-de-Pont to Bremgarten to fetch her.

Mme. de Genlis, dreading the parting, shut herself up in her room on the morning of her departure, leaving a message that she had gone out for the day to avoid that grief. She had not told her the night before that the time had come for their separation.

It was a great sorrow to them both, but was inevitable. Mademoiselle d'Orléans was rightly placed in the care of her own family, and the wandering, adventurous life led from this time by Mme. de Genlis was not desirable for the young princess.



CHILLON

E. H. Beurne

CHAPTER IX

A wandering life—"The tyrant is no more"—Marriage of Henriette—Hamburg—Berlin—Antwerp—Brussels—Returns to France—Terrible changes—Shattered fortune—Literary success—The Empire—Napoleon—Mme. de Genlis and her friends—Death of Mme. de Montesson.

IT will not be possible in a biography so short as this, to give a detailed account of the wandering, adventurous life led by Mme. de Genlis after the severance of her connection with the Orléans family.

She had now only her niece, Henriette, with her, and they set out again upon their travels. M. de Valence, after serving the revolutionists, had been proscribed by them, and was living in exile at Utrecht. There, accordingly, they joined him, and set up a joint *ménage*, first there, afterwards at Altona and at Hamburg.

It was whilst Mme. de Genlis was in Altona that she heard of the fall of Robespierre and the deliverance of her daughter. She was then living in a boarding-house, or inn, kept by a certain Mme. Plock, where she spent a good deal of time; and about one o'clock one morning she was sitting up in her room, writing, when she suddenly heard a

violent knocking at her door, and the voice of M. de Kersey, a peaceable friendly acquaintance of hers, whose room was close by, called out—

“Open the door! Open the door! I must embrace you.”

Thinking he must have lost his senses she did nothing of the sort, and again he cried out—

“It is you who will embrace me! Open the door! Open the door!”

At length she did so, and M. de Kersey, flinging himself upon her neck, exclaimed—

“The tyrant is no more! Robespierre is dead!”

Mme. de Genlis some time afterwards married her niece, Henriette de Sercey, to a rich merchant in Hamburg, after which she went to Berlin, but where she was denounced to the King, accused, without truth, of receiving the Abbé de Siéyes, then in Berlin, and ordered to leave the Prussian territory.

Then she went back to Hamburg, where she found her niece happy and prosperous, and where Lady Edward Fitzgerald, who was always devoted to her, came to pay her a visit, greatly to her delight.

Next she went to Holstein with M. de Valence who left her in an old castle, with the owners of which she formed an intimate friendship, and after staying there some weeks she took rooms in a farm in the neighbourhood where she lived for a considerable time; she had with her then as companion a young girl called Jenny, to whom she was much attached, and who nursed her devotedly through an illness.

Thus she wandered from place to place during the rest of her nine years of exile, generally under an assumed name ; going now and then to Berlin, after the King's death, and to Hamburg, which was full of *émigrés*, but where she met M. de Talleyrand and others of her own friends. Shunned and denounced by many, welcomed by others, she made many friends of different grades, from the brother and sister-in-law of the King of Denmark to worthy Mme. Plock, where she lodged in Altona, and the good farmer in Holstein, in whose farmhouse she lived. The storms and troubles of her life did not subdue her spirits ; she was always ready for a new friendship, enjoying society, but able to do without it ; taking an interest in everything, walking about the country in all weathers, playing the harp, reading, teaching a little boy she had adopted and called Casimir, and writing books by which she easily supported herself and increased her literary reputation.

It was in the year 1801 that she received permission to return to France.

Taking leave of her friends, who implored her not to leave them, she started for Brussels, accompanied by her niece Henriette and Pamela, who went part of the way with her. At Antwerp she met her son-in-law, M. de Lawostine, who had been to visit her when she was living in Holstein. With her two sons-in-law she was always on the most friendly and affectionate terms.

At Brussels she found her nephew, César Ducrest, and, after nine years' separation, was reunited to her daughter, who accompanied her to Paris.

Mme. de Valence, whatever may have been the follies of her youth, was a woman generally beloved for her kind, affectionate, generous disposition, she was devoted to her mother and children, and Mme. de Genlis in her joy at seeing her and France again, to say nothing of the other relations and friends whose affection made so large a part of her happiness, was consoled for the sorrows of her past life.

But her first impressions were very painful, notwithstanding her emotion when first she heard the people around her speaking French, saw the towers of Notre Dame, passed the *barrière*, and found herself again driving through the streets of Paris.

It was all so terribly changed, she could hardly believe that this was indeed the Paris of her youth, the ancient capital of a great monarchy, the centre of magnificence, elegance, and refinement. The churches were mostly closed, if not in ruins; the statues of the saints were replaced by those of infidel philosophers; the names of the streets were changed into others, often commemorating some odious individual or theory or deed of the Revolution; as to the convents the very names of "Jacobin," "Cordeliers," and others were associated with horror and bloodshed. The words *palais* and *hôtel* having been forbidden by the Terrorists, *maison ci-devant Conti*, *maison ci-devant Bourbon*, &c., were written upon the once splendid dwellings of those who were now murdered, wandering in exile or, like herself, just returning to their ruined homes, with shattered fortunes and sorrowful hearts. Everywhere, on walls and buildings were inscribed

the mocking words *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, sometimes with the significant addition, *ou la mort*.

On the other hand things were much better than when, nine years ago she had driven out of Paris to Raincy on the eve of her long exile. The powerful arm of Napoleon had swept away the most horrible government that has ever existed in civilised times or countries; people now could walk about in safety, and live without fear.

If religious processions, and splendid carriages with six or eight horses preceded by *piqueurs*, were no longer to be seen in the streets, neither were mobs of drunken, howling, bloodthirsty ruffians, who would have been made short work of by the great First Consul who so firmly held the reins which had dropped from the feeble hands of Louis XVI.

Unscrupulous, heartless, remorseless, yet he was a saint and angel compared to the frantic, raving, bloodstained miscreants whom he had displaced, and whose work he was now occupied in undoing as fast as he could.

It required time and caution, even with him, in the disturbed state of the country; but already some of the churches were beginning to open; Madame Buonaparte held something extremely like a court at the Tuileries, at which any of the returning *émigrés* who would go there were welcomed. And they were now returning in crowds, as fast as they could get themselves *rayés*.[†]

Mlle. Georgette Ducrest, a cousin of Mme. de Genlis, had emigrated with her family, who were

[†] Struck off the proscribed list.

protected by Mme. de Montesson and Joséphine, and now applied for *radiation*.

M. Ducrest accordingly went with the usual request to Fouché, then minister of police, who replied—

“Will you give me your certificate of residence? all the emigrants have them and prove to me every day that they have never left France.”

“I cannot do that, *citoyen ministre*, I have no papers to show you except an old passport under another name, which I bought for twelve francs at Hamburg. I have been away from France eleven years.

“What! You have no means of proving to me that you have been unjustly placed on the list?”

“*Mordieu!* no.”

“Well in that case I will have you *rayé* immediately for I am persuaded you have never left your country. All those who emigrated have given me so many proofs to the contrary that I am sure you are imposing upon me in an opposite sense, and that you never left Paris. You will receive your *radiation* in two days.”

Even the proscribed arms and liveries were beginning here and there to appear, and the leader in this revival was Mme. de Montesson.

Far from being forced, as formerly, to keep in the background her marriage with the Duke of Orléans, it was for that very reason that she was high in the favour of the First Consul and the more *en évidence* she made it, the better it was for her.

She did not bear the title, which indeed would not then have been permissible; but the well-known

arms and blue liveries of Orléans re-appeared on her carriages and in her *hôtel*, the royal arms of Orléans were embroidered on the fine Saxon linen of her household, the gold plate and delicate Sèvres china denounced by the Terrorists was to be seen at the princely entertainments at her *hôtel* in the *rue de Provence*, where everything was done with the stately magnificence of former days, and whither every one of the old and new society was eager to be presented.

The First Consul had restored her fortune to her, and treated her with more deference than he showed to any other woman; she assumed royal prerogatives, never returning visits or rising to receive them, in fact she was considered and often called in society, the Duchess Dowager of Orléans.

Mme. de Genlis went with M. de Valence to see her two days after her return, and was coldly received, but their relations to each other quickly returned to their usual terms.

Mme. de Genlis had taken rooms close to the Chaussé d'Antin, and began to look after her affairs, which were in a most dilapidated state. Nearly all the property she left at Belle Chasse had been confiscated, she could not get her jointure paid by the persons who had got hold of it, and though Sillery had been inherited by Mme. de Valence, to whom she had given up all her own share in it, Mme. de Valence had let her spendthrift husband waste the fortune and afterwards sell the estate to a General who married one of his daughters, and who partly pulled down the *château* and spoiled the place.

She was therefore very badly off, though her

writings were always quite successful enough to provide for her, but she could not be happy without perpetually adopting children : even now she had not only Casimir, who was always like a son to her, but an adopted daughter called Stéphanie Alyon, and another whom she sent back to Germany.

For more than a year she did not dare to pass the Palais Royal or to cross the *place Louis XV.*, too many phantoms seemed to haunt and reproach her for the past.

But time and circumstances were obliterating crimes and injuries by the side of which her faults were as nothing. Though it is satisfactory to think that numbers of the Revolutionists received the punishment due to their deeds, there were others who for some reason or other managed not only to escape but to prosper ; and with Fouché in a place of power and authority, what, might one ask, had become of all ideas of justice and retribution ?

Mme. de Genlis, finding Paris too dear, moved to Versailles where she lived for a time, during which she had the grief of losing her nephew, César Ducrest, a promising young officer, who was killed by an accident.

She grew tired of Versailles, and returned to Paris, where the First Consul gave her an apartment at the Arsenal and a pension.

A new era of prosperity, though of quite a different kind from the luxury, excitement, and splendour of her earlier life, now began for Mme. de Genlis. She opened a *salon* which was soon the resort of most of the interesting and influential people of the day. In the society of the Consulate and Empire

her early opinions and proceedings were not thought about, and her literary reputation was now great; and besides countless new acquaintances many of her old friends were delighted to welcome her again.

With Talleyrand she had always been on friendly terms.

Napoleon had insisted upon his marrying Mme. Grandt, his mistress, who had always received his guests during the loose society lately prevalent: people said that since he had done so, his *salon* was not nearly so amusing. She was a pretty but extremely stupid person, always making some mistake. On one occasion the celebrated traveller, M. Denon, was going to dine with them, and Talleyrand told her to be sure to talk to him about his travels, adding—

“You will find his book on the third shelf in the library; look it over.”

Mme. de Talleyrand went to look for the book, but had by this time forgotten the title. Turning over several she came upon “Robinson Crusoe,” thought that must be it, and read it eagerly; in consequence of which, during dinner, she began to ask him about his shipwreck and the desert island, and to inquire after the faithful Friday.

M. Denon, who could not imagine what she meant, looked at her in astonishment, only saying—

“Madame?”—when Talleyrand heard and interposed.

Like all the other *émigrées* Mme. de Genlis was horrified at the strange manners and customs of the new society, largely composed of vulgar, unedu-

cated persons, often enormously rich, exceedingly pretentious, and with no idea how to conduct themselves.

Many of them occupied the old *hôtels* of the ruined families of the *ancien régime*, in which their rough voices, strange language, manners and appearance contrasted as much with those of the former owners, as the new furniture, all gilding, costly stuffs and objects mixed incongruously together, did with the harmonious tapestries, ancient heirlooms, and family portraits which they replaced.

In the streets people recognised their own carriages turned into hackney coaches; the shops were full of their things; books with their arms, china, furniture, portraits of their relations, who had perhaps perished on the scaffold. Walking along the boulevard one day soon after her return to Paris she stopped at a shop, and on leaving her address, the lad who was serving her exclaimed—

“Eh! you are at home then!”

It was the *hôtel de Genlis*, which for fifteen years had been the residence of her brother-in-law. She did not recognise it, as all the ground floor was divided and turned into shops!

Another day she received the visit of a woman who got out of a carriage the door of which was opened and shut by a negro dwarf, and who was announced as *Mme. de Biras*.

Her dress was a caricature of the latest fashion, her manner was impertinently familiar. She first made a silly exclamation at being addressed as “*madame*” instead of “*citoyenne*,” then she turned

over the books on the table and when at length Mme. de Genlis politely explained that being very busy she could not have the honour of detaining her, the strange visitor explained the object of her visit.

Her husband was a miller, who had, apparently by his manipulation of contracts given him for the army and by various corrupt practices, made an enormous fortune. He and his wife wished to enter society, but not having any idea what to do or how to behave, they wanted Mme. de Genlis to live with them as chaperon and teach them the usages of the world, offering her 12,000 francs salary and assuring her that she would be very happy with them as they had a splendid *hôtel* in the *rue St. Dominique*, and had just bought an estate and *château* in Burgundy. She added that M. de Biras knew Mme. de Genlis, as he had lived on her father's lands. He was their miller! ¹

It was no wonder that Napoleon was anxious to get his court and society civilised, and the person to whom he chiefly turned for help and counsel in this matter was Mme. de Montesson, who knew all about the usages of great society and court etiquette.

Neither Napoleon nor any of his family had at all the manners and customs suitable to the position in which he had placed them, and he was quite aware of the fact. His mother, as he said, could speak neither French nor Italian properly, but only a kind of Corsican *patois*, which he was ashamed to hear. He did everything he could to win over the *émigrés* and those of the old *noblesse* who had re-

¹ "Salons de Paris," t. iv. p. 85 (ed. Gamin), Duchesse d'Abrantès.

mained in France ; his great wish was to mingle the new *noblesse* he soon began to create with the *faubourg St. Germain*, and his great disappointment and anger was excited by the non-success of his attempts. From the time he rose to supreme power he contemplated a court and a *noblesse* for the country and a crown for himself. And that a court formed out of the materials supplied by his generals and their families would be ridiculous he knew, and meant to avoid.

“Above everything in France ridicule is to be avoided,” he had remarked.

Therefore he encouraged and promoted the marriages of his officers with the penniless daughters of the old families ; therefore he sent the only sister who was young enough to the school of Mme. Campan, formerly *femme de chambre* to Marie Antoinette, and gave that clever, astute woman his support and approbation.

For the same reason he had, at the beginning of his career, married Joséphine, Vicomtesse de Beauharnais ; it was true, as he afterwards declared that he loved her better than he ever loved any woman ; but all the same he had decided that his wife must be of good blood, good manners, and good society ; and although Joséphine was by no means a *grande dame*, she was in a much better position than himself ; and her children’s name, her social connections, her well-bred son and daughter, the charming manners and *savoir faire* of all three were then and for long afterwards both useful and agreeable to him.

Always eager to marry his officers, he was often very peremptory about it.

At the time of the expedition to St. Domingo he desired to send Leclerc, the husband of his second sister, Pauline. Leclerc hesitated, then said he should be glad to go, but he had a tie which bound him to France.

“Paulette?” said Napoleon. “But she will follow you. I approve of her doing so; the air of Paris does not agree with her, it is only fit for coquettes, a character unbecoming her. She must accompany you, that is understood.”

It was not Paulette, explained Leclerc, he would be distressed to leave her, but she would be safe and surrounded by her family. It was his young sister, now at school at Mme. Campan’s, whom he could not leave unprotected, perhaps for ever. “I ask you, General, how *can* I?”

“Of course,” replied Napoleon, “but you should find a marriage for her at once; to-morrow; and then go.”

“But I have no fortune, and——”

“What of that? Cannot you depend upon me? I desire you to make immediate preparations for your sister’s marriage to-morrow. I cannot say yet to whom, but she shall be married, and well married.”

“But——”

“Have I not spoken plainly? Say no more about it.”

Leclerc withdrew, and a few minutes afterwards Davoust came in to announce his intended marriage.

“With Mlle. Leclerc? I think it a very suitable match.”

“No, General, with Mme. ——”

“With Mlle. Leclerc! I not only find the marriage suitable, I insist on its taking place immediately!”

“I have long loved Mme. —, she is now free; nothing shall make me give her up.”

“Nothing but my will!” said Napoleon sternly. “You will go at once to Mme. Campan’s school at Saint-Germain; on your arrival you will ask for your intended bride, to whom you will be presented by her brother, General Leclerc, who is now with my wife, and will accompany you.

“Mlle. Aimée shall come to Paris to-night. Order the wedding presents, which must be most costly, as I am to act as the young lady’s father on the occasion. I shall provide the *dot* and wedding-dress, and the wedding will take place as soon as the legal formalities can be arranged. You now know my wishes, and have only to obey them.”

He rang the bell, and sent for Leclerc.

“Well! Was I wrong? Here is your sister’s husband. Go together to Saint-Germain, and don’t let me see either of you until everything is arranged. I hate all talk of money affairs.”

Mute with astonishment they obeyed, and went to Saint-Germain, where Davoust was presented to Mlle. Leclerc, whom he did not like at all. The marriage took place a few days afterwards.

It was a change indeed from Louis XVI. Every one trembled before Napoleon except his brother Lucien; and perhaps his mother, who, however, never had the slightest influence over him. He required absolute submission; but if not in opposition to his will, he liked a high spirit and ready answer

in a young man, or woman either, and detested weakness, cowardice, and indecision.

When he offered posts in the army to two brothers, who belonged to the old *noblesse*, and they refused, preferring to accept places at court, he exclaimed angrily—

“I have been deceived! It is impossible that those gentlemen can be descended from the brave C——”

Another time a certain M. de Comminges, who had been with him at the *Ecole militaire*, in reply to his question—

“What have you been doing during the Revolution? Have you served?”

“No, Sire.”

“Then you followed the Bourbons into exile?”

“Oh! no, Sire! I stayed at home and cultivated my little estate.”

“The more fool you, monsieur! In these times of trouble every one ought to give his personal service one way or the other. What do you want now?”

“Sire, a modest post in the *octroi* of my little town would——”

“Very well, you shall have it; and stay there! Is it possible that I have been the comrade of such a man?”

For the Revolution, the royalists themselves could scarcely have entertained a deeper hatred and contempt. He would speak with disgust of its early scenes, of the weakness of the authorities, which he despised, and of the mob, which he abominated.

Young and unknown, he had been present with Bourrienne on the 20th June, and seen the raving, frantic mob rushing upon the Tuileries. He followed with Bourrienne in a transport of indignation, and saw with contempt Louis XVI. at the window with a red cap on. He exclaimed—

“How could they let that *canaille* pass in! They should sweep away four or five hundred with cannon; the rest would run.”

He was then twenty-three.

Mme. de Genlis never went to the Imperial court, but led a quiet literary life; quiet, that is to say, so far as the word can be applied to one whose *salon* was the resort of such numbers of people.

Most of the Imperial Family used to go to her, but her chief friend among them was Julie, Queen of Spain, wife of Joseph Buonaparte, Napoleon's eldest brother. She was also very fond of Julie's sister, Désirée, wife of Marshal Bernadotte, afterwards Queen of Sweden. For Bernadotte she had the greatest admiration, saying that his appearance and manners were those of the old court.

The Princess de Chimay, once Mme. Tallien, was also received by her with gratitude and friendship; she never forgot that she had saved the life of Mme. de Valence, and in fact put an end to the Terror.¹

Mme. Le Brun, speaking of Mme. de Genlis, says, “Her slightest conversation had a charm of which

¹ She said the Princess was still beautiful, extremely interesting, told thrilling stories of what she had seen in her strange life, but never spoke against any one.

it is difficult to give an idea. . . . When she had discoursed for half an hour everybody, friends and enemies, were enchanted with her brilliant conversation."

Mme. de Montesson died in February, 1806, leaving the whole of her fortune to M. de Valence, except one or two trifling legacies and 20,000 francs to Mme de Genlis, and, as her brother was then not well off, Mme. de Genlis added her 20,000 francs to his.

CHAPTER X

Interesting society—Anecdotes of the past Terror—Casimir—The Restoration—Madame Royale—Louis XVIII.—The *coiffeur* of Marie Antoinette—The regicide—Return of the Orléans family—An astrologer—A faithful servant—Society of the Restoration—Isabey—Meyerbeer—Conclusion.

ALL the great artists, musicians, actors, and literary people who had returned to Paris after the Terror came to the *salon* of Mme. de Genlis; and many were the strange and terrible stories they had to tell of their escapes and adventures.

Talma had, in the kindness of his heart, concealed in his house for a long time two proscribed men. One was a democrat and terrorist, who had denounced him and his wife as Girondins. For after the fall of Robespierre the revolutionary government, forced by the people to leave off arresting women and children, let the royalists alone and turned their fury against each other. Besides this democrat who was hidden in the garret, he had a royalist concealed in the cellar. They did not know of each other's presence, and Talma had them to supper on alternate nights after the house was shut up. At last, as the

terrorist seemed quite softened and touched and polite, Talma and his wife thought they would venture to have them together. At first all went well, then after a time they found out who each other were ; and on some discussion arising, their fury broke forth—

“Only a royalist would say that !”

“Only a terrorist could speak so !”

“You speak like a villain !”

“You think like a scoundrel !”

“If ever we get the upper hand !”

“If ever we get our revenge !”

They both sprang up, declaring it was better to die than to stay with such a monster, and left the room.

After this Talma kept them separate ; they were in the house several weeks unknown to each other until it was safe for them to be let out.¹

Even among the revolutionists there was sometimes a strange mixture of good and evil. The Auvergnat deputy Soubrany was proscribed by his friends, and met Fréron in the street, who said—

“What are you doing here ? We have just proscribed you !”

“Proscribed me ?”

“Yes. Save yourself ; come to my house, you can hide safely ; they won't look for you there. Only make haste.”

“I can't. I must go home.”

“Why ? It will be putting your head in the wolf's mouth.”

“I must go back to my house. An *emigré* is

¹ “Souvenirs d'un Sexagenaire ” (Arnault).

hidden there. I alone know the secret of his hiding-place ; if I do not let him out he will be starved to death."

He returned in time to save the *emigré*, but not himself.¹

Mme. de Genlis was very happy at the Arsenal with Casimir and a little boy named Alfred, whom she had adopted.

Casimir was already seventeen, a great comfort, and very popular. He had been on a visit to London, when, as he returned with Prince Esterhazy, who had a boat of his own, he had a message at Dover from Pamela begging him to go to her. Since the arrest and death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald she had married Mr. Pitcairn, American Consul at Hamburg, but was overwhelmed with debts, and for some reason insisted on coming to Paris. She was hiding from her creditors, and appealed to Casimir, who gave her fifty louis and hid her on board the boat. She had with her her daughter by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and stayed some time at Paris, in spite of the representations of Mme. de Genlis that she ought to go back to her husband at Hamburg.

For nine years Mme. de Genlis lived at the Arsenal, and then moved to another apartment, but was always surrounded with friends and consideration. Except amongst her immediate relations and adopted children, she was not so deeply loved as Mme. Le Brun, or even the eccentric Mme. de Stael, but her acquaintance and friendship was sought by numbers of persons, French

¹ "Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire" (Arnault).

and others, who were attracted by her books, conversation, musical, and other talents.

With the fall of the Empire departed her pension and all assistance from the Government.

She had long renounced and repented of her proceedings of former days, and was now extremely royalist, but the daughter of Marie Antoinette was not likely to receive one who had been, if not implicated, at any rate hand-and-glove with the enemies of her mother.

With the deepest reluctance Louis XVIII. yielded to what he was assured to be an absolute necessity and allowed, as Napoleon had found it necessary to allow, more than one even of the regicides, who had survived and were powerful, to hold office during his reign. Their powerful support was declared to be indispensable to the safety of the monarchy, and the union of parties which he hoped to achieve.

But, except in cases of absolute political necessity and at the entreaty of him, who was now not only her uncle and adopted father, but her king, the Duchesse d'Angoulême would receive no one who had in any way injured her mother. She would have nothing to do with Mme. de Stael, and would not even receive Mme. Campan, because she did not believe she had been always thoroughly loyal to her; though in that many people said she was mistaken. Mme. Campan, in her memoirs, professes the greatest affection and respect for her royal mistress, and during the Empire she always kept in her room a bust of the Queen.

On the other hand, any one who had been faithful and loyal to her parents, now met with their reward.

There was at Versailles a certain Laboullé, *coiffeur* to Louis XV., and to Marie Antoinette when the Dauphine. He invented a perfume which he called *eau Antoinette*, and which was so much in vogue that he opened a perfume shop at Versailles, which was patronised by Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette when they came to the throne. He married, and the Queen was very kind to his wife, whom she used to employ in her various charities; and was devoted to her.

It is satisfactory to know that the brutal, dastardly conduct of the Versailles populace was at any rate punished, in a way they probably had not thought of. The departure of the King and court ruined the place, before so prosperous. The population shrunk to a third of its former numbers.

The Laboullé moved to Paris, and opened a shop at 83, *rue de la Roi*, afterwards *rue Richelieu*, which soon became the centre of Royalist plots.

During the captivity of the Queen, Mme. Laboullé was always trying to get to her and very often succeeded; when she always took her some of the perfume. These excellent people saved the lives of numbers of royalists, and how they themselves escaped the guillotine, only Providence can tell. When the surviving members of the royal family returned, the Duchesse d'Angoulême sent for her, expressed her deep gratitude, and always loved and protected her.

The saintly character of the Duchess, however,



MADAME ROYALE

Madame Vigée Le Brun

To face page 470

made her forgive and even help those who repented and suffered, even though they had been the bitterest enemies of her family.¹

During her exile in England, she was in the habit of visiting and helping the French who were poor or sick, and one day being in a hospital, and seeing a French soldier evidently very ill, she spoke to him with compassion and offered him money, which he refused, with a strange exclamation, apparently of horror.

"Take it, *mon ami*," she said, "I am your countrywoman, you need not be ashamed to receive a little help from me."

"I know you are French, Madame," he muttered with embarrassment.

"You know me, then?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Well, then, that is all the more reason why you should not refuse what I offer you."

"On the contrary, Madame——" he stammered.

"*Comment!* on the contrary? What do you mean? Tell me."

"I cannot explain," said the man uneasily.

"I entreat you to tell me; have you anything against me?"

The soldier burst into tears.

"You are suffering," said the Duchess; "come confide in me, we are both French in a foreign land, and ought to help and comfort each other."²

"Alas! Madame, the sight of you recalls to me a

¹ "Salons d'Autrefois" (Ctsse. de Bassanville).

² *Ibid.*

recollection so fearful, that I would give my life to blot it out of my memory. I was one of those who beat the drums in the *place de la Révolution* on the 27th January."

The Princess turned pale, trembled, and held out the gold, saying—

"In the name of him who is gone, I bring you this help; he loved all Frenchmen."

And she turned away, leaving the soldier in tears.

When Madame Royale was at last released from prison, she did not know the fate of her brother and her aunt, Madame Elizabeth. On hearing that they were dead, she declared that she did not wish to live herself; but her heart soon turned to her French relations, and her one wish was to get to them.

She was, however, first sent to her mother's family in Austria, where she was received, of course, with great affection, but kept as much as possible from seeing even the French *émigrés*, of whom there were so many in Austria. The Austrian plan was to marry her to one of the archdukes, her cousins, and then claim for her the succession to Burgundy, Franche Comté, and Bretagne; to all of which she would, in fact, have had a strong claim if France could have been dismembered; as these provinces all went in the female line, and had thus been united to the kingdom of France.

Of course the plan was visionary, and the provinces had been so long incorporated into France, that even if the allies had consented to the dismemberment, the nation would never have submitted to it.

It would have perhaps been no wonder if, after all she had suffered in France, she had identified herself with her mother's family, and in another home and country forgotten as far as she could the land which must always have such fearful associations for her. But it was not so. Her father had told her that she was to marry no one but her cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême, who, failing her brother, would succeed to the crown; and had written to the same effect to his brother the Comte de Provence.

The Princess had therefore, as soon as she could get away from Austria, joined her uncles and aunts and married the Duc d'Angoulême, concentrating all her affection upon those remaining members of her family, who received her with the deepest joy and tenderness.

Louis XVIII. says of her—

“Madame Royale united all the virtues of her own sex with the energy of ours. She alone would have been able to reconquer our sceptre if, like her grandmother, Marie Thérèse, she had had the command of an army. . . .”

Of their entry into Paris, he says—

“I was in an open carriage with Madame Royale by my side,[†] MM. de Condé were opposite; my brother and the Duc de Berri rode by us . . . the Duc d'Angoulême was still in the south . . . I saw nothing but rejoicing and goodwill on all sides; they cried ‘*Vive le Roi!*’ as if any other cry were impossible. . . . The more I entreated Madame Royale to control her emotion, for we were approaching the Tuileries, the more diffi-

[†] The Comtesse de Provence had died in exile.

cult it was for her to restrain it. It took all her courage not to faint or burst into tears in the presence of all these witnesses. . . . I myself was deeply agitated, the deplorable past rising before me. . . . I remembered leaving this town twenty-three years ago, about the same time of year at which I now returned, a King. . . . I felt as if I should have fallen when I saw the Tuileries. I kept my eyes away from Madame Royale for fear of calling forth an alarming scene. I trembled lest her firmness should give way at this critical moment. But arming herself with resignation against all that must overwhelm her, she entered almost smiling the palace of bitter recollections. When she could be alone the long repressed feelings overflowed, and it was with sobs and a deluge of tears that she took possession of the inheritance, which in the natural course of events must be her own.

“How thankful I was to find myself alone in the room occupied first by my brother, then by Buonaparte, to which I came back after so long an absence: absolute solitude was a necessity to my mind. I prayed and groaned without interruption, which relieved me; then I resolved irrevocably to act in such a manner as never to expose France or my family to the Revolution which had just ended. . . . I lay down in the bed of Buonaparte, it had also been that of the martyr king, and at first I could not sleep . . . like Richard III. I saw in a vision those I had lost, and in the distance enveloped in a sanguinary cloud I seemed to see menacing phantoms.”¹

¹ “Mémoires de Louis XVIII.,” t. ix. pp. 57-61.

With the King returned those that were left of the Orléans family. The best of the sons of *Égalité*, the Comte de Beaujolais had died in exile, so also had the Duc de Montpensier. The Duchess Dowager, saintly and good as ever, Mademoiselle d'Orléans and the Duc de Chartres remained. Both the latter had made their submission and expressed their repentance to the King, who in accepting the excuses of the Duc de Chartres said—

“Monsieur, you have much to do to repair the crimes of your father. I have doubtless forgotten them, but my family, but France, but Europe will find it difficult not to remember them. . . . In accepting the name of *Égalité* you left the family of Bourbon, nevertheless I consent to recall you into it. . . . Duc d'Orléans, it is finished, from to-day alone we will begin to know each other.”

The Duke wished to make his excuses to Madame Royale, but she said it would be long before she could bear to see him.¹

Mme. de Genlis was received with affection by her old pupils, and had a pension from them during the rest of her life.

The Duc d'Orléans, leaving the room when she came to see them, returned, bringing his young wife, who said graciously, “Madame, I have always longed to know you, for there are two things I love passionately, your pupils and your books.”

Mme. de Genlis, though she did not go much into society, being now exceedingly royalist, was

¹ “*Souvenirs de Louis XVIII.*,” t.vii. pp. 395-7. This interview took place at Mittau at the intercession of the Duchess Dowager of Orléans and the Emperor of Russia.

presented at court, and must have recalled those far off days when she drove down to Versailles with Mme. de Puisieux to be presented to the magnificent Louis XV.

A curious story is told, that at the time when Louis XIV. was building the palace of Versailles, his then all-powerful mistress, Mme. de la Vallière, said to him that he must, according to the custom, have the horoscope cast of the palace. He laughed at her superstition, but told her he would leave the matter to her. She accordingly consulted an astrologer, who said, "After a hundred years the kings of France will leave Versailles."

"Will they ever return?" she asked, to which he replied—

"No; the people will not allow it."

Louis XIV., to whom the idea of the people "allowing" the King to do anything he chose must have appeared ludicrous, replied that their love for their King would, indeed, be excessive if they would not bear him out of their sight, and ended by saying—

"I envy my successors!"

The tone of society was entirely different during the Restoration from that of the Empire. The lavish expenditure in entertainments, dress, and daily life was no longer the fashion. An expensive toilette at any but a very great festivity was no longer correct, and even at court the extravagant splendour of the costumes of the Imperial court was not encouraged. The principal people were no longer those who possessed enormous fortunes which they were eager to spend; the

nobles and gentlemen whose names were the most distinguished at the court of Louis XVIII. being most of them nearly if not quite ruined.

Their property had been confiscated, their estates seized, and their *hôtels* and *châteaux* either burnt or sold.

In some cases it was possible to recover part, though often only a fragment of their possessions ; in other cases not : it depended to a great extent what or who the forfeited estates belonged to. Sometimes, as in the case of the Duchess d'Ayen, people who had not emigrated, were allowed, even if they were murdered, to leave their estates to their families ; but the whole state of things seemed an inextricable confusion impossible to explain ; especially in a work of this kind.

Many cases there were of romantic devotion and loyalty, by which the property of a family had been partly saved for the owners by their faithful servants. Such was the story of the Marquis de —, whose castle was burnt, and who with his wife perished in the flames. Their two boys managed to escape, but not together. One took refuge in England ; the other in Germany, neither of them knowing of the existence of the other.

When the Revolution was over, they both came back to France and strange to say, met and recognised each other at the ruins of their own *château*. While they stood mournfully gazing at them, a regiment of cavalry passed by. The eyes of the commander fell upon them, and suddenly he ordered the regiment to halt, and calling the two young men, said—

"Are you not the MM. ——?"

On hearing that they were, he remarked—

"I am afraid, Messieurs, that you are very badly off."

They could not deny this; and to their astonishment the officer, hurriedly saying that he was born on their estate, pressed a purse of gold into the hand of one and marched off. The country was still in a state of anarchy and they never could discover who their benefactor was.

They stood in astonishment looking after the soldiers, and then turning, walked sorrowfully back to the ruins, where a decently dressed working man who had been observing them, came up and again asked them the same question.

"Are you not the MM. de ——?"

"Yes, we are," replied the brothers.

"Well, I am ——. I was head-gardener at the *château* in the old time, and now, Messieurs, if you will honour me by coming to my house and accepting some refreshment, I will show you something that will surprise you."

The young men gladly went in, and after giving them an excellent *déjeuner*, their host lighted a candle, took a spade, and told them to follow him. He led them into the garden, cleared away some earth with his spade, and uncovered a stone. This he lifted up, disclosing an underground passage through which he led the way. It ended in a cavern in which lay the whole of their family plate and valuables which this excellent man had saved and concealed during all these years.

“Here is the family plate which I was able to secure for you,” said he. “I always kept it in hope of your return.”

Overcome with joy and gratitude the eldest brother, to whom according to the custom of their family it all belonged, divided the property, which was immensely valuable, into three portions, giving one to his brother, one to the faithful gardener, and keeping one himself, with the proceeds of which they each bought an estate. The sons of the gardener, who were educated with their own, became, one a successful merchant, the other an officer in the French Navy.¹

There was, of course, a great mixture of new and old, many quarrels and much ill-feeling: increased by the extreme animosity and pretensions on both sides.

The *émigrés* were not likely to forget the murder of those dear to them, their long years of poverty and exile, and to see with patience their homes and possessions in the hands of strangers.

The newly risen were uneasy and jealous of the

¹ This story, which has never before been published, was told me by a member of the family of the Marquis in question. Although many of the worst of the revolutionists were domestic servants, there were numbers who displayed the most heroic loyalty and affection. I myself saw many years ago, when dining in Paris at the house of a legitimist, the Duc de —, an old butler who was pointed out to me by one of the family as having been employed when six years old in La Vendée to carry food to a priest hidden among the hills. On one occasion he was caught by a party of revolutionist soldiers who threatened him with instant death unless he betrayed the priest's hiding place. *Pour Dieu et le Roi* (For God and the King) was all the child would say, and one of the men, touched by his tender age, spared him. (Note by author.)

émigrés, and not unnaturally irritated at the provocation they often gave them and the scorn with which they were not seldom treated.

Louis XVIII. had enough to do to hold the balance between those who wanted everything put back exactly as it was before '89, and those who were in continued fear of the revival of the old state of things. However, he managed to do so, and kept his crown, which unfortunately his successor could not.

It is a singular thing that all the three races, Capétien, Valois, and Bourbon should have ended with three brothers.

The Marquis de Boissy, a devoted Royalist with a long pedigree, went to one of the court balls in the dress of a Marquis of the court of Louis XV. On one of the princes of the blood observing to him—

“That is a curious dress of yours, Monsieur,” he replied, looking round the ball room :

“It is a dress that belonged to my grandfather, Monseigneur ; and I think that if every one here had got on the dress of his grandfather, your Highness would not find mine the most curious in the room.”

Mme. de Genlis had friends amongst old and new, French and foreign. The Vernets, Mme. Le Brun, Mme. Grollier, Gros, Gerard, Isabey, Cherubini, Halévy, all the great singers and musicians were among her friends. She lived to see the first years of the brilliant, too short career of Malibran. Pasta, Grassini, Talma, Garat, and numbers of other artistic celebrities mingled with



Gérard

JUDITH PASTA

To face page 180

her literary friends. The household of Isabey was like an idyl. He had met his wife in the Luxembourg gardens, a beautiful girl who went there to lead about her blind father. They married and were always happy though for a long time poor. But the fame of Isabey rose ; he was professor of painting at the great school of Mme. Campan, where every one under the Empire sent their daughters. He painted Joséphine and all the people of rank and fashion, and received them all at his parties in his own *hôtel*. Mme. Isabey lived to be eighty-eight, always pretty and charming. Her hair was white, she always dressed in white lace and muslin, and had everything white in her *salon*, even to an ivory spinning wheel.

They went a great deal into society and to the court balls under Napoleon ; and Isabey used to design her dresses and make them up on her in this way : when her hair was done and she was all ready except her dress, he would come with a great heap of flowers, ribbons, gauze, crêpe, &c., and with scissors and pins cut out and fasten on the drapery according to his taste so skilfully that it never came off, and looked lovely. On one occasion when they were not well off he cut out flowers of gold and silver paper and stuck them with gum upon tulle ; it was pronounced the prettiest dress in the room.

Before the coronation of Napoleon, the latter said to him, "Make two large water-colour sketches of the procession with correct costumes, every one in their right place. I will send them to study your designs, which will be exhibited in the great

gallery of the Tuileries, so that there may be no confusion."

"Sire, when are these two pictures to be exhibited?"

"The day after to-morrow."

Isabey bought boxes full of little dolls, masses of materials and pins; dressed them all from the Empress to the last page, and after working two days and nights went to the Tuileries.

"Ah! there you are, Isabey. You have brought me the designs I ordered?"

"*A peu près, Sire,*" and he pointed to a heap of enormous cases in the courtyard, which in about an hour he had arranged in the gallery in perfect order, much to the delight of the Emperor, who burst into a fit of laughter when he saw them.

After the alarms of the Hundred Days and all the misfortunes involved, it took some time to restore order and security. For a long time the *Champs-Élysées* were not safe to walk in after dark.

One morning the *concierge* of an isolated house there was asked by a tall, thin man in black, with a strange look whether there was not a pavilion in the garden to let.

"Yes, sir."

"Is it quite out of the way of every one?"

"Very far, sir."

"So that one would be quite alone? No one could hear anything that went on there?"

The *concierge* did not half like this, but winter was coming on and a pavilion in the middle of a large garden was difficult to let.

“I will take it for three months, here is the rent in advance and a *louis* besides. Keep the key. I will come in this evening. If any friends arrive before, take them there and ask them to wait till I come.”

“Monsieur has forgotten to tell me his name.”

“Name! Oh! my name is the devil,” and he hurried away.

After dark a man wrapped in a great cloak, under which he carried some large thing, his hat pulled over his eyes, rang and said “The Devil.”

The pavilion was pointed out, and several others followed, all with cloaks concealing more large objects.

“It cannot be Satan,” said the wife of the *concierge*, “but it may be conspirators.”

“It is a gang of assassins,” said he, “bringing bodies of victims to bury in the garden.” Just then the man who had hired the pavilion came in; the wife followed him and rushed back pale with terror.

“Go and fetch the police! go quick! They are murdering some one. I heard cries, groans, and chains! Run, if you want to save him from these wretches!”

Hurrying away, the *concierge* soon re-appeared with the police and two soldiers. They proceeded to the pavilion; the door was locked, and just then a strange cry arrested their attention. They beat at the door ordering it to be opened, which it immediately was by a man, who said—

“What are you doing here? What do you want?”

“What are you about yourself? I am a police officer, and I arrest you in the King’s name as a criminal.”

“You arrest me as a criminal? and for what?” while a burst of laughter was heard inside.

“Come, Monsieur,” said the police official, “I see there is some mistake. What is your name?”

“Meyerbeer, but that does not tell you much.”

“But what is your country and profession?”

“I am German, a composer of music, I see no harm in all that.”

“Nor I either,” said the police officer, laughing; “but why then did you say you were the devil, and what are you and your companions doing?”

They let him in, and he saw musicians with desks and instruments, practising for the infernal scene in “Robert le Diable,” which Meyerbeer was going to bring out, and which sufficiently accounted for the chains, groans, and cries of that celebrated chorus.

Mme. de Genlis lived to see her great-grandchildren, and also to see her pupil, the Duc de Orléans, upon the throne. She had never, of course, again the life of riches and splendour which for many years she had enjoyed; but she was philosophical enough not to trouble herself much about that; she had the interest of her literary pursuits, a large circle of acquaintances, the affection of her family and of her adopted children. Alfred turned out extremely well, and Casimir made an excellent marriage, settled at Mantes and devoted himself to good works, so that his adopted mother said his



MALIBRAN

To face page 184

household was saintly. She was always welcome there.

The errors of her youth she abandoned and regretted, and her latter years had by no means the dark and gloomy character that she had pictured to herself, when she left the Palais Royal and fled from France and the Revolution, in whose opening acts she had rejoiced with Philippe-Égalité.

The Gresham Press,
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED,
WOKING AND LONDON.

2940

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 019 640 339 5